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SYRIA, PALESTINE,  
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Fig. 4. The settlement of the Indians.







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AND  
ASIA MINOR,  
FROM 1842 TO 1850.

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# SYRIA, PALESTINE,

AND

# ASIA MINOR.

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## CHAPTER I.

The Latachia mountains—Perilous ascent—Adventure with robbers—The Mountain Pass—Orde—Turkish Khan—Beautiful scene—Dayertil-Sheik—The water girls.

THE distance from Slybe to Orde, the next station on this route, is reckoned at about thirty miles. The road leads directly over the central and most lofty portion of the Latachia range of mountains, and in many parts is almost inaccessible to horsemen. Huge masses of broken

earth and stone have fallen across the road; gigantic trees have been blown down or torn up by the roots; and in the the closest part of the thickly-wooded pathway, the sun has for many a long year scarcely penetrated. These wild and uninhabited parts are the resort not only of chetahs and hyenas, but of a band of ruffianly Ainsiaree robbers, who, though they seldom molest the passing European, show less consideration for their own countrymen, and many a wretched native traveller has disappeared in the mountains, and never again been heard of. Sometimes skeletons have been discovered by the government wood-cutters, who at certain periods of the year frequent this locality, well armed, and in strong numbers, for the purpose of collecting fuel for the consumption of the various villages during winter. Beyond this, however, nothing has been found, nor has a single body ever been discovered.

We passed unmolested several detached groups of this mountain banditti, and more repulsive-looking villains I have never encoun-

tered. Morose, heavy, beetle-brows gave an unnatural ferocity to their eyes ; and their long matted beards and hair, and loose-hanging jacket, made them particularly disagreeable objects in so lonely a spot. Every man had a brace of pistols, a gun, a dirk, and a yatacan ; and B—— and myself were entirely at their mercy at any period of the day—an unpleasant reflection, considering how little mercy they possess.

Once during our progress we conceived ourselves to be in a very critical situation. We were going on very quietly, having come to a tract that wore a somewhat improved aspect, when suddenly up started three men from the brushwood, where they had been concealed from our view, and simultaneously fired off their guns in the air. I had not had time to observe the aim they took, but felt persuaded that we must both be shot through the head, as the shock made us stagger in our saddles. But we ascertained that we were no way hurt, and we had hardly done so, when up the ruffians came,

and demanded bukshish, which was, they said, their right as guards, placed to protect the traveller through the mountains. We gave them a few piastres, and were glad to be rid of them so easily ; and I strongly suspect that had we been natives, we should have been treated very differently. Europeans, certainly, in their very dress, carry about with them a charm, which in almost any part of the East secures them from injury and insult.

Orde is a miserable village, situated in the centre of a thick forest of trees, and consisting of a double row of houses, forming a street, through which caravans and travellers must pass, as there is no other outlet within many an hour's ride. At Orde a troop of irregular cavalry is stationed, but I am inclined to think that they are greater marauders than even the Ainsairees themselves, against whose inroads they are presumed to be a protection.

At the Turkish khan, where we lodged for the night, there were a number of native travellers, whose destination was Latachia and

Beyrout. Many of these had been at Orde upwards of a week, remaining for other travellers to arrive, till they should muster a sufficiently strong body to venture through the mountains. Many were the tales of bloodshed and rapine recounted by these unfortunates, as they sat crouching round the crackling wood fire in the centre of the khan; and such was the impression they made on three Hebrews bound for the Holy City, that they immediately relinquished their pilgrimage, and returned towards Antioch the very next morning.

After passing Orde, the road becomes safer and better for travellers. The forest then begins quickly to thin. No more thieves or cut-throats are to be met with; and the road, as you advance, becomes more and more easy, and would in some places almost admit of a carriage. The whole land here is in a high state of cultivation, and small villages, surrounded by olive-trees, are grouped along the way at half-hourly distances from each other. There was one extremely lovely spot, which we



crossed a little before mid-day. It was a splendid ravine, up either side of which grape-vines were growing in the wildest luxuriance. Beneath, was a purling stream of deliciously cool water, which murmured along over the many-coloured pebbles that formed its bed. Ever and anon, there were tracks of thickly-set myrtle and the oleander-bush; and round and over these crept wild convolvuluses of every hue and colour, while the wild and graceful violet spread fragrance around, mingling with the breeze that swept down the mountain's side, loaded with the odours of many wild grasses. Such a spot would be a perfect Eden, if inhabited by a good and industrious peasantry, who knew how to appreciate and improve upon the best gifts of nature; but now it lies as neglected as a wilderness.

About noon we reached Dayertil-Sheik, the best built village in all North Syria. There is a fountain and a cistern very romantically situated under the shade of wide-spreading beech-trees. The Turks come to the cistern

to wash their hands and feet before praying, and they therefore objected much to our dogs being permitted to remain loose, as they would certainly pollute their water.

There was a large concourse of young and pretty women, who had come to fetch water from the fountain. They were all unveiled, though surrounded by men of their own faith, and exposed to the gaze of Europeans. Instead of filling their jars, they waited to watch us eat our luncheon, and made loud and sometimes not very complimentary comments upon our proceedings. The moment I addressed them in Arabic, they became silent, and seemed perfectly astounded; and I suppose as a peace-offering, a young man ordered one of them, who seemed to be either his sister or his wife, to fetch us a pot of yurt, or curdled cream, which makes a nice refreshing drink when mixed with water. On returning the empty pot, I slipped into it a small piece of money about twice the value of the lebon given; and the gift was very quietly pocketed. Having

rested a sufficient time, we mounted and proceeded towards Antioch, which town we did not reach till an hour after darkness had set in.

## CHAPTER II.

Antioch—The great earthquake—The benevolent priest  
—Franks and Turks—Search for reliques—The  
curiosity-dealer—The Orontes—Description of the  
country—A Turkish Eeffendi—The Jester and the  
Caliph.

IN fixing upon Antioch as their fortified capital, and strong house of defence, the Crusaders showed considerable sagacity; and at the same time manifested their reverence for that city which gave a name to their faith, for in Antioch the disciples of the Redeemer were first called Christians. The city is admirably

adapted by natural defences for resisting a besieging army. Its climate is excellent ; and its resources for the support and maintenance of a garrison are inexhaustible. In fact, it would be hard to discover in the whole Eastern hemisphere a spot which could rival Antioch in any one of these advantages.

Situated at the base of an extensive range of very lofty mountains, along the highest ridges of which the still existing ruins of fortified walls and watch-towers serve to indicate the former strength and extent of the city, Antioch, in the day of her renown, was enabled to command the immense plains that surround it in the directions of Latachia, Aleppo, and Iskanderoon ; and it was impossible that any hostile force could approach the city from those places, without suffering severely from the garrison. At the same time, towards the south-west and north-west, the whole expanse of ocean was clearly discernible to the eye, and an enemy's fleet could be distinguished for days before it could anchor off the port of Sileucia.

The lofty walls of the city, of whose immense strength ample proof remains in their ruins, encircled the town in every direction, running down from the highest ridges of the mountains, till they reached the embankment of the Orontes, when they were carried on in a line parallel with the river, here running nearly due-north and south. The gates, leading on to the bridge by which the river is crossed in proceeding towards Sileucia or Scanderoon, are to this day of immense strength, and the bridge itself is one of the finest specimens of architecture to be found in the East. Parts of it have been necessarily renewed and patched up, but the arches are of very ancient construction, and still promise to hold out ages longer against the perpetual warfare they sustain from the rapid waves of the Orontes, which already tell on the modern portions, though less exposed to their action.

The last great earthquake of 1822, was severely felt at Antioch, and in addition to the destructive effects of this catastrophe, Ibrahim

Pasha, in his attempts to beautify the modern city, blew up, by means of subterranean mines, almost every particle that remained of the original walls of the city. The superb barracks built by him to accommodate ten thousand men, as well as the beautiful country-residence on the banks of the Orontes, erected for the Pasha's private use, were constructed of materials which had originally formed the oldest structures of the city; and as if it were retribution for this sacrilege, these modern fabrics, built not fifteen years ago from the spoil of monuments destined to commemorate the prowess and piety of the Crusaders, are already in a tottering and dilapidated state, while the few vestiges that still remain of the watch-towers and buttresses built centuries since, are as strongly held together by their mortar and lime as they were at their erection.

Antioch is the only town in all Syria or Palestine where tiles are used in roofing the houses. The heavy rains which prevail during the autumn and spring must have given rise to

this practice, and I am strongly inclined to think that the introduction of tiles must have originated with the Crusaders; for it is not in the nature of Syrians or Asiatics, however much annoyed by exposure to damp, to deviate one inch from the precepts and practices handed down to them through successive generations from their ancestors, dating from the days of Noah downwards.

I resided at Antioch for eight months during the year 1847, and in all that time was never a single day absent from it. An old Catholic priest, Père Bazelio, an Italian doctor, and myself, then formed the European society of Antioch; but the Italian doctor would never go to mass on Sunday, and so the priest gave him up as an irreclaimably lost sheep, and I was the only European admitted to his friendship. He was an intelligent and enterprising man, and was wont to make wonderful discoveries of sites and ruins, and deserted grottos, and tombs of old kings, and many other things, which he insisted on my visiting and examining



with him. He was himself very devout, but if his means of support had depended upon the munificence of his flock, I fear he would have fared but ill; for they were the least church-going people I ever met, the congregation never amounting to more than a dozen individuals. The Padre, however, emulated the Apostles in his simple method of living. With his staff in one hand, and a morsel of bread in the other, he toiled up mountains and down ravines in search of mouldering ruins and rusty antiques, appeasing his appetite from his scanty wallet, and quenching his thirst from one of the many streams that so plentifully abound round Antioch. On some of these solitary excursions he would stumble across an old copper coin, or a bit of antique stone, with some almost effaced inscription, and then his gratification and delight would be beyond all bound. He declared to me that an old ruin at the entrance of the town was to his certain knowledge once inhabited by the Caysors; and as for Paul and the other Apostles, he was

familiar with their common haunts in every direction.

Direful controversies took place between him and the doctor on these subjects whenever they chanced to meet upon neutral ground, the doctor declaring it was humbug to imagine that any trace of veritable antiquities could exist; when Antioch, as was well known, had on three distinct occasions been destroyed and almost entirely engulphed by terrific earthquakes. The doctor was a Roman by birth, and as the dispute waxed warm, both parties argued in the Latin tongue with as much gesticulation and noise, as ever two Roman senators could have used in debating the most weighty affairs of the State.

Amongst the Turks, by whom gesticulation is seldom or ever resorted to, and whose tone of conversation scarcely exceeds a whisper, these loud disputes of the two Franks frequently created a very lively sensation. A mob of men and boys would collect outside the door, and inquire of my servants whether we were going

to cut each other's throats, or if any intervention on their part would be requisite to prevent bloodshed. It was a difficult task to make them understand that the theme of argument was nothing more or less than an old wall or a broken-down tomb, and when they did believe such to be the case, they gravely stroked their beards and came to the conclusion that Franks were universally mad, and made more noise about a piece of old stone, than all the inhabitants of Turkey would be guilty of, if there was a general massacre of their wives and children.

The modern town of Antioch is built in streets of walls, in deference to the usage existing in Turkey of hiding women from the public gaze, and which is incompatible with houses overlooking each other, or having windows towards the street. There are some few exceptions amongst the houses of the Ayahs and Effendis; but these are generally separated from the herd of plebeians; and through their lofty windows and balconies, there is little fear

of the women in the harems being seen or overlooked.

The generality of the houses are but one story high, and each house is entirely surrounded by a wall as high as the building itself. Thus the whole street has the appearance of one continuous stone wall, with entrance doors at intervals from twenty to thirty yards: the tiled roofs being the only indication to people in the street, of human habitations within the walls. The streets are wide, and are paved about a yard and a half on either side of a deep broad gutter in the centre. Foot passengers keep to the pavements; horsemen and loaded animals are compelled to confine themselves to the ditch. Like all Turkish towns, Antioch would be poisoned with filth, were it not for the fortuitous circumstance of its being built on a gradually rising ground, up to the foot of the high hill behind. When a shower of rain occurs, torrents of water come pouring down the many ravines and chasms of the mountains, and forcing an exit through the

streets of the town, carrying away everything moveable into the fast-flowing waters of the deep Orontes. The result is, that when the rain is over and fine weather returns, the streets have been entirely purified, and as cleanly swept and washed as though a legion of buckets and brooms had been at work.

It is on these occasions that those antique coins and stones are collected, for which Antioch is so justly celebrated. No sooner has the weather cleared up after a smart shower of rain, and the waters commence to abate, than swarms of little children may be observed busily occupied in the numerous gutters, armed with sieves and sticks, and brooms, sweeping up and clearing away the mud, and earnestly occupied in hunting for antiques. Seldom is the search fruitless. Some of the little seekers find silver coins, others copper; and some few are lucky enough to light on precious stones.

These children had been for some time in the practice of carrying off their booty to a Turk called Hadji Ali, who made it his business to

trade in antiques. From the hard bargains he drove he was more Jew than Turk, buying up everything from the children at ridiculously low prices, and then gaining enormously by retailing them to English travellers. From naval officers, in particular, he acquired large sums, and had been so spoiled by their generosity, that he now on all occasions demanded the most exorbitant prices for things that were of themselves of the smallest value. Hadji Ali was as illiterate as he was knavish, and the old rogue on one occasion was completely taken in by a very *modern* antique, for which he had been induced to pay a large sum. Visiting the tents of some English travellers as was his wont ; and unrolling one by one from the many folds of old rags and dirty paper in which they were enveloped, the stones and antiques that he set most value upon, he at length drew one with apparent reluctance from the very bottom of a little tin canister, declaring his unwillingness to part with it for anything less than twenty guineas. The price asked, naturally excited

the curiosity of every one present, and on the precious relique being at length produced and inspected, it turned out to be a piece of common glass, with the portrait of Liston as Paul Pry, and the familiar device of "I hope I don't intrude." Ali was vastly discomfited by the laughter of the group, and offered his cherished antique to his next visiter for five pounds, when he learnt, to his consternation, that it was not worth five farthings. Hadji, however, had in his possession a beautifully cut emerald, which presented the striking device of seven distinct heads, on being turned in as many directions; but the rogue knew that the emerald was in itself of great value, and would never listen to any reasonable offer for it. The result of his obstinacy in refusing to part with this relique was, that an old Turk got possession of it for nothing. A Mutzelligim, who had avowed his determination to make as much money as he could during his brief sojourn at Antioch, (for a Mutzelligim's stay in office and power is generally very brief,) got intelligence of Ali's

wealth and of the method he had adopted to accumulate riches ; and the consequence was, that the poor wretch was dragged out of bed one night, and carried before the Governor, charged with having defrauded the Government by assuming to himself the right of selling antiques. His property was confiscated and he himself bastinadoed, and it was not till he had lingered many months in prison, that he was, by the Mutzellim's recall from Antioch, set at large, to commence the world again as he best could.

An incalculable number of valuable coins and antiques must be annually washed into the Orontes by the heavy mountain torrents of winter. The immense stream of water that rushes through the streets after repeated heavy showers of rain, has often alarmed me for the safety of my house. Stones that ten men could hardly move, have been rolled past my door, with a booming sound like thunder, and the impetuous floods would inevitably sweep everything before them, were any impediment offered to their free junction with the Orontes. I re-



mained on one occasion a close prisoner in the house during three successive days and nights, when the force of the torrent was such that I dared not open the doors for fear of being swept away by the stream. Such violence is, however, of rare occurrence, and the gutters being deep, and houses well excavated, the water seldom rises to a level with the door.

It is a wonderful and fearful sight to witness the rapid course of the swollen river; as it tears by, roaring and foaming towards the sea; and what adds grandeur to the scene on such occasions, is the loud detonating thunder, which finds a thousand echoes amongst the hills, and the brilliant flashes of vivid lightning, which flash forth in awfully rapid succession. The elements seem combined for the destruction of the place; but the river is rapid and sure in her course—the rain stops—the tempest passes away—the mountain torrents are exhausted—the clouds clear off—the sun bursts forth, and all is again peace and security, while the cool balmy breezes that blow refreshingly

through orange and citron-groves, load the atmosphere with the most delicious fragrance.

In scenery, few spots can compete with Antioch. Standing on the bridge, the spectator can view both the river and the sea, while distant blue mountains and luxuriant gardens, endless pasturage-grounds and green hillocks, handsome buildings on one side, and on the other the river again, its banks lined with crumbling old ruins—minarets and mosques, poplars and evergreens, and an immense expanse of rich-looking country, waving its sheaves of corn beneath the gentle breeze. A precipitous hill leads to the ruins of the old city walls, from which can be obtained a view of the whole country round. The bold outline of the distant Cassins, the winding river, the wide, calm lake, clearly discernible from this high point, form a new and more charming prospect.

But the town itself, it must be confessed, is not in keeping with its lovely situation. This, however, is not the opinion of its Turkish

denizens, who, while smoking their pipes by the river side, feel that a wall, the top of which no ladder can reach, and which no intruder can peep through, is more desirable than anything else; and he has also a preference for massive doors, with keys, bolts, and double locks; for he remembers that he has some frolicsome little lambs locked up at home, and he is gratified to have the key of the fold in his pocket. There is no knowing what the consequences might be, if the ladies were allowed to have their own way, and to go in and out of the house as they liked.

The life of the Turkish Effendi, or gentleman, at Antioch, is rather of a monotonous character. He lives in his own, or rather in two houses—for the harem, though part of the same house, is entirely partitioned off, and no one but himself and his slaves know where it is, or how to get in and out of it. He always keeps the door-key in his pocket, and when the ladies want anything, they rap, like so many woodpeckers, at a kind of revolving cupboard, which

is securely fastened into the wall. Through this cupboard, at which neither party can see the other, the lady speaks to the servant, and tells him what to fetch or buy for her at the bazaars ; and the article is brought and placed in the cupboard, which is wheeled round by the lady inside, so that she may take it out. When they are desirous of walking in the garden, or going to the bath, the key is delivered into the charge of some old duenna, and the Effendi sees nothing more of it till the party has returned, and the ladies are safely locked up again.

The Effendi is, generally speaking, an early riser, and seldom sits up till a late hour at night. On issuing from his harem, he is waited upon by half a dozen slaves, who assist in his ablutions : one holds the ewer, another the soap, a third the towel, and a fourth and fifth assist him with his clean apparel. Having washed and dressed, he goes through his morning devotions at the nearest mosque. Returning home, his servants serve him with his cup of bitter coffee and pipe of real gibili,

by which time it is about seven A.M., the fashionable hour for a Turkish gentleman to call and receive visits. Acquaintances and friends saunter in, and salute the host, who salutes them. Beyond this, there is little conversation ; for Turks hate talking ; and still less joking, for they detest laughing. They inquire like a parcel of anxious doctors, very kindly after each other's health, and after the general salubrity of their respective houses, for no one ever dreams of asking how his friend's wife is ; that would be considered the grossest breach of decorum. Draft-boards, and pipes, and coffee are introduced. Some play, others look on ; and, save the rattling of the dice, very little is heard to interrupt the silence of the room. The Effendi's clerk comes in occasionally, with a batch of unanswered letters in his hands, and whispers mysteriously to the Effendi, who either goes off into a violent fit of rage, or nods his consent in approval of what has been done, just as the contents of the letter are pleasing or the reverse. Most of these letters are

from the overseers, or the labourers in the Effendi's silk-gardens, or olive-plantations ; some few from people craving his assistance, others demanding repayment of loans of money ; for there are but few of the Effendis of Antioch, though all rolling in riches, that are not indebted to some person or other for cash loans, as, such is their strange avarice, that though they possess (to use an Oriental expression) rooms full of money, they are loth to extract onefarthing from their treasures for their daily expenditure.

About ten A.M., the Effendi orders his horse, and followed by his pipe-bearer, who is equally well mounted, takes a sedate ride in the environs of the town. On Saturdays, in lieu of riding, he goes to the bath, but in either case he is pretty punctual as to the hour of his return. On reaching home, more pipes and coffee are produced, and he affixes his seal (for a Turk never signs his name) to the various business letters that his secretary has prepared, ready for despatching. The cry from the minaret now warns him that it is the hour for mid-day

prayer. Washing his hands, face, and feet, he proceeds to the sami (mosque), where he remains till it is time to breakfast; and when the breakfast is served, he goes through the forms of ablution again. After his meals, he is required to wash once more.

I may here remark, for the guidance of strangers, that there is nothing a Turk considers more degrading than the want of this scrupulous cleanliness in Europeans; and considering the climate, and the wisdom of doing in Rome as Rome does (apart from all other arguments), travellers, although seldom obliged to use their fingers as Turks do at their meals, ought strictly to adhere to this custom whilst amongst Orientals.

The Effendi, after his breakfast, which is generally a very good one, and is prepared by the careful hands of the fair ladies of the harem, retires into his seraglio for a couple of hours' siesta, during the heat of the day. In this interval, if a Pasha, or a bosom-friend, or the devil himself were to appear, and ask of the

servants to see their master immediately, they would reply that he was asleep in the harem, and that it was as much as their heads were worth to disturb him.

At about two P.M., the Effendi is again visible. He then occupies his time in playing drafts, or reading a Turkish newspaper. At four, he goes once more to the mosque, and thence proceeds to the secluded garden, on the banks of the Orontes. Here several other Effendis are sure to meet him, for it is their usual evening rendezvous. Carpets are spread; baskets of cucumbers and bottles of spirit produced; and they drink brandy, and nibble cucumbers, till nigh upon sundown. Sometimes cachouks, or dancing boys, dressed up in gaudy tinsel-work, and musicians, are introduced, for the entertainment of the party. By nightfall, every individual has finished his two—some, more—bottles of strong *aqua vitæ*, and they return homewards, and dine—and dine heartily. Coffee is then introduced, but nothing stronger—as they never drink spirit



or wine after their evening meals. The nine o'clock summons to prayer, resounds from the minaret, and nine minutes after that, the Effendi is fast asleep, and nothing under an earthquake would bring him forth from the harem again, till he rises simultaneously with the sun next day.

It may be safely stated that the whole of the wealth yielded by the rich and fertile soil of Antioch, and the villages under its jurisdiction, is divided between its Ayans and Effendis. The chief among these, Musoud Effendi, is said to possess upwards of one hundred mulberry plantations, which, in silk alone, yield him a revenue of about fifteen thousand pounds per annum. Hadgi Halif Aga ranks next to Musoud Effendi. He is descended from a renegade Jew, and possesses all the natural cunning of his ancestors, by which he has greatly augmented the influence and power arising from his social interest and position.

The Governor of Antioch, however talented he may be, and however determined to support

his authority and the dignity of his post, is considered a mere cypher, and is little more respected amongst the population of Antioch ; for, apart from the certainty of his being sooner or later bribed over to the party of some influential Ayan, the Megilis, or Council, being composed of the various Effendis, whose policy it is to act *en masse*, as it were, pull together, and he can never hope to carry any measure into effect which would be injurious to their private interests.

These Ayans are thirteen in number, all more or less rich and influential, and the greater part of the population may be said to earn their bread directly or indirectly in their employment, or service ; for amongst them is divided the whole of the territorial possessions, from Jesser il Haded on the one side, to the villages of Suedia, Bitias and Cassab on the other—all land in a high state of cultivation, producing wheat, barley, and other grain, or laid out in mulberry plantations for the rearing of the silk-worm.

I believe that if the title-deeds of many of these Effendis were examined, the Sultan's Government would discover that the revenue has been defrauded to a considerable extent, and that if their hourly transactions with the Custom-house officers and other local authorities were strictly investigated, defalcations to a considerable amount would be found as to the actual amount of excise which they pay to the revenue. The peasantry on their estates labour twelve hours in the day, and at the expiration of twelve months, find themselves, instead of being any the better, indebted to their iniquitous landlord. The vast improvements and ameliorations that have been effected under the present enlightened Sultan's sway have, however, reached even Antioch, though they are not yet carried out to any extent.

The system of extortion and villany practised by the Ayans commences as follows :—some poor destitute man, with a wife and family to support, is seeking, as he best can, to earn some means of livelihood. A charitable Ayan

takes pity on his condition, and offers to employ him as a servant, either to till the ground, or to rear the silk-worm, and reel its produce into silk. In either case, as he is in great distress, the Ayan very considerably advances some two or three hundred piastres, at the average rate of interest of from thirty-five to forty-five per cent, and which is to be repaid at the season of harvest, not in specie, but in produce, and the value that this produce shall be sold at, is before-hand stated and contracted for; and the very lowest marketable price is fixed upon. The terms which landholders and the cultivators of the land agree upon is, two-thirds of the produce for the master, and one-third for the labourer. The quantity of silk-worms allotted to the care of one man is generally calculated to produce, in good seasons, between three and four rotolos of silk—as a medium, say three—consequently the labourer has one rotolo of silk to his share, which at the best of times will hardly produce two hundred piastres. It is, therefore, evident that he has no means of re-

paying the original loan, and the most he can do is to pay the interest, and that even cripples his resources so tremendously—frugal as may be his wants—that he is necessitated to borrow again for the support of his family. The debt goes on increasing, the means of disbursing it become more and more difficult, and in the course of a few years the wretched man and his wife, and his sons and daughters, are in point of fact serfs and slaves to the Ayan. That the power he thus possesses is abused, and in some instances to an infamous extent, there can be little doubt, considering the depraved nature of the man, and his natural hatred to all who may chance to profess any creed but his own. This is almost invariably the case with the peasants, who are principally Christians and Fellahs—no real Turk is ever found in so debased a position.

It is worthy of note, that the very money advanced by these Ayans to their peasants is borrowed from the European and native merchants of Aleppo and Antioch, at almost

as exorbitant an interest as that upon which they advance sums to their unfortunate peasants ; for, as I have already stated, there are none who can muster courage to extract money from their well-filled coffers ; and they pledge the bangles and jewels of the women rather than touch their own stores, redeeming them a month or two after the harvest, when they receive their regular revenue. To those with whom he has no money transaction, the Effendi is agreeable and gentlemanly in his manners ; and some of them are very intelligent.

It is not an uncommon thing, on a fine moonlight night during the summer months, to see a large *réunion* of the Effendis and Ayans of Antioch at some temporary *café* erected on the banks of the Orontes ; where, indolently reclining upon carpets and against cushions, they swallow with eager ears the romantic and wild tales of the professional story-teller. The Syrian story-teller is like a travelling actor, continually strolling from village to village, and town to town, throughout the

Turkish dominions, and repeating the same jests, and going through the same gesticulations, night after night, to a crowd of fresh listeners. His tales are new and amusing to every one but himself; to himself they have, from constant repetition, become odious, and as threadbare as the old cloak on which he is seated. One of the Ayans with whom I was intimately acquainted, insisted on my accompanying him one fine evening to listen to the narrations of a celebrated tale-teller. I went with him very much against my own inclination, expecting fully to be prosed to death by some droning, miserable creature. I was agreeably surprised, however, for the man was eloquent and amusing; and his story of the "Jester's Retaliation on the Caliph" excited so much merriment, that I will venture to present it to the reader.

#### THE JESTER'S RETALIATION ON THE CALIPH.

"Many years ago, there dwelt in the great city of Bagdad a poor man, the son of a

shepherd, who tended his flocks by the banks of the Tigris. In course of time, the poor man's father died, and the son became shepherd in his stead. As a natural consequence on finding himself his own master, with an almost bewildering income for an Arab bachelor, he very shortly afterwards took unto himself a wife, who was a comely girl and pleasant to look upon ; and the male issue of this alliance was the hero of this tale, Achmet the Jester. The child was born with a smile upon his face, and a sharp acute leer in his eye, and began to joke before he had cut his teeth.

“ In those good old times it was the practice at the Caliph's Court to employ jesters, as a kind of animal necessary to digestion and good-humour ; and upon the same principle that the Caliph bought a horse to ride when he wanted exercise, he bought a jester by whose wit he might be made merry when dull and weary. The Caliphs were not over particular in the method of extracting mirth from the Court jesters. They made them dance



upon hot bricks to sharpen their intellect, whilst the bricks made them caper to the great amusement of beholders.

“ After these practical jokes, the jesters were wont to lie at death’s door for weeks and months together ; and then the more humane feelings of the Caliphs were brought into play, and they daily heaped presents on them, and sent their most experienced hakims to look after the invalids, threatening them with immediate destruction if they failed in curing their sufferings. More than one instance has occurred during the sway of the Caliphs of a wretched doctor being presented with a silk cord, where-with he was politely desired to strangle himself off-hand, as he had been unsuccessful in some hapless victim whose skull had been seared through and through, by the application of a red-hot iron diadem.

“ It may be easily conceived, that with such alarming precedents no man possessing one grain of that uncommon sense termed common sense, would voluntarily expose himself by

witty ebullitions to the chances of being exalted to the unenviable post of Court jester; but the post was not an optional one, all being more or less serfs and slaves under that despotic sway, and any man convicted by the mouths of two or three witnesses of having been guilty of a succession of good jokes, was instantly conveyed to the palace, richly enrobed, and metamorphosed from a looby into a courtier.

“ Such had been the fate of the jester Achmet; but he had been born under a fortunate star, and his tongue was the pen of a ready writer. If words failed him on the spur of the moment, his hideous contortions of limb and visage never did; so that he rose gradually, but steadily, to be a universal favourite at Court. As such he had amassed considerable riches at Bagdad; and had not his serfdom bound him to his royal patron, he would have retired into private life, and devoted himself for the remainder of his days to peace and quietude. He infinitely preferred cracking walnuts to

jokes ; but he had become so indispensable an item of the every-day comforts of the Caliph, that all hopes of liberation were vague indeed, and depended apparently on but one alternative—his own or the Caliph's death. He was decidedly in favour of the latter event ; and was daily expecting its occurrence, but, alas ! hope deferred maketh the heart sick, and hearts in this state grow desperate and uncontrollable.

“ Whilst in this state of mind, Achmet underwent a very severe trial. One cold winter's day—for in Bagdad, scorching hot though the summers be, the winters are often intensely cold, and the thermometer falls many degrees below zero—the Caliph in his ride through the city chanced to observe a pond of water in a half-thawed, half-frozen condition. It immediately struck him that it would be capital fun to have the jester immersed in this water, and then left to dry as he best could on its muddy banks. The unfortunate Achmet was accordingly sent for, and the Caliph, who was

as generous as he was wicked, informed him that if, after being immersed in this stream, he should permit his clothes to be dried by the sharp north wind then blowing, without evincing any outward symptoms of suffering from cold—such, for instance, as knocking together of knees, or chattering of teeth—he would bestow upon him, in addition to his immediate liberation from servitude, one thousand aldins in gold. Too eagerly did the man, who had oft-times literally gone through fire and water in the discharge of his every-day duties, jump at this most liberal offer, and the bargain was struck, a stipulation being added that Achmet should not even so much as look at a blazing fire whilst undergoing the freezing ordeal.

“He was well dipped, and then drawn through the freezing particles of water, yet he manfully withstood the trial, and not so much as a tremor escaped him. The Caliph was on the point of declaring him victorious, when, the unfortunate jester chancing to look

up, his attention was attracted by the blazing apparition of a fire-balloon, which had chanced to ignite in the air thousands of yards off. The many sycophants that surrounded the Caliph instantly declared Achmet a loser, as imagination, they said, was so powerful, that the very sight of the distant conflagration was sufficient to impart to him a genial heat. Remonstrance was vain, and Achmet, overwhelmed by the disappointment, was carried to bed delirious.

“ Winter had come and gone again, and the birds were carolling in the glorious spring-tide noon, when Achmet, who had not long been liberated from the bed of sickness, once more appeared, feeble and suffering, in the presence of his royal master.

“ ‘ Caliph, defender of the faithful and descendant of the Prophet,’ said Achmet, ‘ I have long been thy faithful and loving slave, and thou hast been to me as the sun is to the earth we tread upon, after winter’s cruel sway. Under the shadow of thy greatness have I,

from being a worm that crawled upon the earth, become a butterfly, fit to flutter amongst thy royal courtiers. But Allah has decreed it, that all things created must sooner or later come to an end, and I am grown old in wickedness and sorrow, and I feel that my days upon earth have been nearly meted out. Wherefore, O Caliph, I would pray, to the end that the shadow of honour may rest upon my grave when I am numbered with the faithful and true believers, that thou, O mighty potentate, be pleased to condescend to honour thy slave with thy imperial presence in the gardens which thy bountiful hands have bestowed upon him, and partake of such humble fare as the firstlings of my flocks and the best fruits of my gardens can combine to set before thee.'

"The Caliph cheerfully granted the prayer of his jester, and at the appointed time was seen reclining on a humble carpet, smoking and waiting as patiently as though he were the humblest of men, for the repast to be served. At length, however, hunger began rather to ruffle

his good temper, which Achmet perceiving, sought to appease him by assurances that in a very few seconds the repast must be ready. Meanwhile, he humbly suggested that a walk through the grounds might serve to divert the Caliph, and agreeing to this, the royal party proceeded to inspect the beauties of the garden.

“Fine fruit-trees were abundant, but these were plentiful and common in every garden of Bagdad. At length, they came to a palm-tree, extremely straight and tall, which arrested the Sultan’s attention, as well as his progress. Palm-trees are plentiful at Bagdad, but in a little candlestick at the foot of this particular tree, the Caliph observed a miserable little wax candle, lighted and burning feebly in the glaring light of day.

“‘What means this, Achmet?’ asked the Caliph, rather tartly of his slave. ‘Is this an emblem that thou too art become an infidel or a gour?’

“‘Neither, your Highness,’ replied the jester. ‘This candle merely indicates the position of

my kitchen, and if the Caliph will condescend to gaze upwards towards the lofty branches of the tree, his mightiness will perceive that the pots and pans in which our mid-day repast is cooking, are suspended in regular order.'

" 'Idiot!' shrieked the enraged and hungry despot. 'Art thou fool enough to suppose that the sickly light of this wretched taper can impart any heat to vessels suspended so high above it in the air?'

" 'Sire,' meekly replied the jester, 'your Highness taught me to know that the warmth of a burning balloon many thousand yards above my head, was all-sufficient to dry the damp and cold garments hanging on my back, when I had been dragged through the frozen pond; and I therefore presumed that the warmth of this taper would be all that was requisite to cook our breakfast, especially as fuel is expensive, and hard to be got at this season.'

"This retort so pleased the Caliph, that he not only gave poor Achmet his immediate liberty, but bestowed upon him the originally



promised aldins of gold; and they say that to this day there are none wealthier in Bagdad than the descendants of the witty and courageous jester Achmet."

Antioch is, beyond dispute, the cheapest place in the world, as well as one of the healthiest; and if it were not for the ragged little boys, who hoot at every stranger, and throw stones at his door, annoying you in every possible way, I should prefer it, as a place of residence, to any spot I have visited in Europe, Asia, Africa, or America.

My house was of perfectly new construction, well planted, and well situated, and proof against water, as well as wind. I had four rooms—a sitting-room, a dining-room, a bed-room, and a dressing-room. I had a walled enclosure of about eighty feet square, where roses and geraniums vied in beauty with jessamines and lilies. There was also a poultry-yard, a pigeon-house, stables for three horses, a store-house, a kitchen, and a servants' room. I had in the garden a grape-vine

(muskatel), a pomegranate-tree, a peach-tree, a plum-tree, an apricot, and a China quince ; and, in addition to all these, a fountain perpetually jetting up water, and a well, and a bathing-room. For all this accommodation, I paid three hundred and fifty piastres—about three pounds sterling—and this was a higher rent than would be paid by any native. Of course, the house was unfurnished, but furniture in the East is seldom on a grand scale : a divan, half a dozen chairs, a bedstead, a mattress, a looking-glass, a table or two, and half a dozen pipes, and narghilies are all one requires. Servants cost about three pounds a head per annum. Seven and a half pounds of good mutton may be had for a shilling. Fowls—and fat ones too—twopence each. Fish is sold by the weight—thirteen rotolos for a beshlik, or about seventy pounds weight for a shilling. Eels—the very best flavoured in the world—three halfpence each. As for vegetables, whether cabbages, lettuces, *des asperges*, celery, watercresses, parsley, beans, peas, radishes, turnips, carrots, cauliflowers, and

onions, a pennyworth would last a man a week. Fruit is sold at the same rates ; and grapes cost about five shillings the horse-load. Game is also abundant. Dried fruits and nuts can be obtained in winter. In fact, living as well as one could wish, I found it impossible—house-rent, servants, horses, board, washing, and wine included—to exceed the expenditure of forty pounds per annum.

Under these circumstances, it may appear marvellous that many Europeans, possessed of limited means, have not made Antioch their temporary home ; but every question has two sides, and everything its *pros* and *cons*. The *cons*, in this instance, are the barbarous character of the people among whom you live ; the perpetual liability of becoming, at one instant's warning, the victim of some fanatical *émeute* ; the small hopes you have of redress for the grossest insults offered ; the continual intrigues entered into by the Ayans to disturb your peace and comfort ; the absence of many of the luxuries enjoyed in Europe ; the want of society

and books, and the total absence of all places of worship, which gradually creates in the mind a morbid indifference to religion, and which feeling frequently degenerates into absolute infidelity. It is better to choose with David in such a case, and say, "I would rather be a door-keeper in the house of the Lord than dwell in the tents of iniquity."

In the vicinity of Antioch the cultivation of the sugar-cane is carried on to some extent. With a little attention, it might be brought to perfection, and become a source of wealth to the country. At present, it is of an inferior quality, and merely cultivated to satisfy the cravings of the feminine and infantile portion of the inhabitants.

Amongst the ruins worthy of note, may be enumerated the primitive Christian Church, in which Paul and Barnabas preached, and in which the modern pastors of the Greek and Catholic religions perform grand mass at stated seasons, and on certain holidays of the year. There are several very fine old aqueducts, which

in former times led the pure waters from the seven fountains of Daphne into the very heart of the town, and the principal gate built over the road leading towards Aleppo is a very ancient building, and is now distinguished as Bab Bulos, or St. Paul's Gate.

On Fridays there is always a fair held in the principal market of Antioch, which is invariably well attended and well stocked. Here, if a judge of horseflesh, one may pick up a capital animal for two or three pounds, serviceable and not ill looking. As for poultry, I have purchased a dozen young cocks (they seldom sell hens) for less than sixpence.

The liquorice plant grows wild in the country about Antioch. Sylla Marittima, or the squill, is also abundant, and in 1849 it was discovered that the sarsaparilla plant was not unfrequently met with.

Antioch, as regards its import trade, is, as I have before mentioned, entirely dependent upon Aleppo. Jewish merchants have agents established here, who retail the goods at an exorbitant

price, or barter them for silk or olive-oil. All European articles are extremely costly, and none more so than European clothes. After the mousoom, or silk season, numerous emissaries from pettifogging French and Italian traders established at Aleppo, make their appearance at Antioch, armed with authority to make purchases of silk to a limited extent, and these knaves practise the most cruel frauds on the unfortunate peasants. My friend, the Catholic priest, is generally in the height of his glory about this period, for most of these Aleppine clerks are in conscience necessitated to have frequent confessions and absolutions, which yield a small revenue to the poor old padre.

The export trade of Antioch is very limited, except as regards grain. So long as the free importation of wheat into Europe is permitted, there is small doubt that Antioch will reap a rich harvest from this commodity. A few bad gall-nuts and some sessame-seed are annually exported.

The Christians inhabiting Antioch are a

humble, unoffending race; poor, and hard-worked, yet good-tempered, and willing to oblige. They make very faithful and excellent servants, and the height of their ambition is to serve a European. I had one who was with me upwards of four years, and I never met with a more honest or more attached servant. They never cease praying that the minarets of Antioch may fall upon the Turks' heads, and that the Christian temple may rise and flourish again under the English sway.

The British have an agent at Antioch, one Michael Adib, who is far from popular. He has, indeed, been ejected from the Council-chamber of the Turks, on more than one occasion by a Mutzellig or Effendi; and has been obliged to put up with the affront. An Englishman, or British subject, getting into any trouble, has to look to this individual for protection and assistance, and, of course, has to wish he may get it.

The population of Antioch, after the cholera of 1848, was reckoned at about seventeen

thousand souls ; of which fourteen thousand were Turks ; fifteen hundred Ainsairees ; and fifteen hundred Christians. There are in the city no less than fifteen mosques and only one Christian church ; though it was here the name of Christian was first applied, and first assumed.

The eel-fisheries are very extensive, and some of the *dépôts* are in the most delightful situations on the banks of the river. Here picnic parties daily meet to discuss fresh eels, made in veritable *pâté-gras* by a baker who has wisely speculated in building an oven in the neighbourhood.

Antioch from its central position, its proximity to the sea, its great salubrity and the resources it affords for enriching the country, ought to be the capital of Syria, instead of being suffered to remain a ruined and neglected town. What a field does it not offer to enterprise and industry ! how rich would be the harvest yielded to the labourer ! and how superabundant its supply of every luxury and comfort that a people could desire. I must confess that

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I hate to see a country so systematically laid out, and so overburthened with cultivation, as the country between Ostend and Bruges is. There is no variety there in the landscape. It is always a field, a dyke, a duck and a drake ; more fields, more dykes more drakes and more ducks ; but in Antioch, there could not, were it even brought into the highest state of cultivation, exist a like monotony. Here are mountains that shall ever stand fast ; rivers that no human power can stop in their progress. And the hills and the valleys, the river and the lake, though ever the same, are continually presenting new features to the eye, as clouds more or less obscure, the sun's tints upon the earth. Here can a man in the fulness of his heart and in the purest truth and sincerity exclaim : " O Lord ! how manifold are thy works ; in wisdom hast thou made them all : the earth is full of thy riches."

## CHAPTER III.

Suedia — An English philanthropist in the East — Magnificent gardens — Winter sports — The seasons — Oppressed peasantry — The silk-worm — Gathering of the silk — The harvest — The vintage — The ancient Sileucia — Daphne's cataracts — Mr. Barker's grave.

Two hours and a half ride from Antioch, through a country that is a perfect paradise upon earth, but over the most execrable and detestable road, brought me to the ancient Sileucia. Famed in olden history as the emporium of Eastern commerce and as a port unequalled for safe harbourage, Suedia is celebrated in our own days as having been

the residence and favourite retreat of the late John Barker, Esq., formerly her Majesty's Consul-General in Egypt, equally eminent as a philanthropist and a Christian gentleman.

Suedia, or, as it is termed by the Syrians, Zectoonli, embraces a wide range of mulberry-gardens, extending over a space of ten miles by three, and containing a scattered and mixed population; equal, if not exceeding in number, to that of Antioch. The village is spread chiefly upon the banks of the Orontes, and running parallel with the beach, which forms a boundary to the waves of the Sileucian gulf, where the Orontes ends her course, and nature has scattered around her choicest gifts.

It would require the pen of an inspired writer to describe in adequate colours this garden of Eden. Mulberry, lemon, and orange-trees form an uninterrupted succession of gardens, surrounding picturesque little cottages, each one eclipsing the other in neatness and beauty of situation. The peasants themselves are hale, robust, and sturdy-looking

men; the children are rosy and healthy; and the women beautiful, innocent, and happy. Each stops, as a stranger passes, to make a bashful salute, and bid him welcome to their country. This is what I never met elsewhere; and it was very pleasing to find uncivilised and untaught Arabs so polite and courteous. There is, in fact, nothing that a native of Suedia will not do to render a sojourn amongst them agreeable and pleasant. They are a simple people, and as simple in their habits as in their character. The sun teaches them when to rise, and darkness when to seek their beds. They labour for subsistence; they sleep for refreshment; they laugh with the merry, and weep with the afflicted. Their simple old pastor, in their venerable rustic church, has pointed out to them from childhood how heinous is sin—how amiable virtue; and they are taught ever to remember that an all-seeing Eye will detect and punish sins hidden to men, as surely as public offences will entail flagellation from the Pasha and Governors of the

district. Thus they live happy in their innocence, and in each other, and almost void of offence towards God and man; a meet people to inhabit a country like that they dwell in.

To this quiet retreat, Mr. Barker, after zealously serving his King and country for a long period of years, retired, on quitting Egypt, to enjoy in seclusion the pension awarded him by the Government, and devote the remainder of his days to the peaceful pursuit of agriculture. Few men could better appreciate the rich gifts Nature had lavished on this spot. A perfect botanist, and skilled in agriculture, his time and income during a period of nearly twenty years, were spent in promoting every improvement in the cultivation of the soil; and many have grown rich, directly or indirectly, from the methods of tillage introduced into the country by Mr. Barker.

On taking possession of his wife's landed inheritance, Mr. Barker's first steps were to erect an edifice becoming his means and station, and one that would render his sojourn

in the country agreeable to himself and his family, and the many friends and strangers, who delighted in visiting him, remaining his guests for days, weeks, and, in some instances, months. There was no mistake as to the genuine hospitality of the worthy host. His words of welcome were truth itself; and the warm cordiality of his excellent heart was felt in the firm grasp of his hand. "Sir," he has said to me on more than one occasion, "it is the traveller who confers a favour upon me by remaining, and giving me the benefit of his society, provided he be a man that is at all sufferable. Some few, I must own, have stayed longer than myself or my family could have wished, but they have been very few." A perfect gentleman, an accomplished scholar, a sagacious thinker, a philosopher, and philanthropist, people wondered how so great a heart could content itself to remain in a place like Suedia. I had the honour to be on intimate terms with him during my two years' residence in Suedia, and I learned to love and respect

him so much, that when he died, full of years and honour, I felt a void in my heart, to which I still recur with the deepest regret.

Mr. Barker's main object in life was to confer benefits upon his suffering neighbours. He knew how much misery and wretchedness was to be every day met with in England, and how incompetent were his means, all-sufficient though they were for his own wants, to relieve such distress; but in Syria a more available field for benevolence presented itself. How far and how well his charitable disposition exerted itself may be imagined, when I say that out of more than six thousand inhabitants, there is not one who does not to this day bless the memory of the good man, who through so many years was the friend of all. I ought to add that through fifty years of uninterrupted intercourse with as many thousand people, he never made one enemy, but was universally respected and beloved.

The gardens of Mr. Barker have been long celebrated for the quantity, variety, and ex-

cellent quality of their fruit. In the piece of ground attached to his own private residence, I have plucked from the tree the guava, the sweet-kernelled apricot, the Stanwick nectarine (for which the Duke of Northumberland obtained for him a silver medal), the sweet-kernelled peach, the shucarpara, the celebrated apricot of Damascus, the plaqueminia kaki, the loquat or *nepolis japonica*, the mandarin, and the Malta blood-orange; in short, the fruit of every country in the world. At Mr. Barker's request, I wrote to Penang and China for seeds of some rare fruits and spices, which Colonel Butterworth and Sir George Bonham had the kindness to send me; and though previously produced solely in those climes, they have since sprung up in these charming gardens. But alas! they did not thus display themselves till the excellent old man had passed away. On the demise of Mr. Barker, the whole of his landed property reverted to his amiable and kind-hearted widow.

Besides introducing the finest fruit-trees in



the world, and many rare ornamental trees, from the cuttings and graftings of which the whole of the gardens of Suedia have been supplied, Mr. Barker greatly ameliorated the condition of the natives by obtaining from Italy regular supplies of the best silk-worm seed, which was then divided amongst them. Originally, the silk produced was of a very inferior quality; it has now become the finest in any part of the East. As for flowers, it was a perfect sight to see the garden attached to Mr. Barker's house at any season of the year, even in the depth of winter, when the surrounding mountains were covered with snow, and everywhere else vegetation had disappeared, thousand of Bengal roses and other rare and beautiful flowers here presented the appearance of perpetual summer.

In the winter months the air at Suedia, though sometimes excessively cold, is bracing and invigorating. Snow occasionally falls even on the lowlands, particularly towards the end of January. Then commences the season

for woodcocks. Mr. Edward Barker, our excellent and talented Vice-Consul, is an indefatigable sportsman, and a crack shot, and would often fetch home eight or nine brace before breakfast. The only drawback during the winter is the wretchedly muddy state of the roads, or rather lanes, which separate the different cheftliks or mulberry plantations, and over which one must pass before arriving at the more elevated and dry ground, where riding, shooting, or walking becomes a delightful exercise. Thus we Europeans passed the winter days at Suedia when it was not raining. When it rained we stopped at home, or gathered round the fine old fire-place at Mr. Barker's. The ladies worked, the gentlemen talked, or wrote or read; for at Suedia Hall there was a well-furnished library, and, during the life-time of the old gentleman, all the best new publications were regularly sent him, as well as the newspapers, including "Galignani," the "Illustrated News," and "Constantinople Gazette." There was plenty of food for literary

palates ; and, when we were tired of this, we promenaded up and down the fine large halls, joined in the merry games of the children, or repaired to the organ-room, and listened to music by Donizetti, Rossini, and Bellini. The organ was unique of its kind, embracing a perfect orchestra of wind instruments, to which one could never grow tired of listening. On being wound up, it would play for half an hour without ceasing, and produced, in turn, overtures, waltzes, marches, quadrilles, and even polkas. Only imagine the polka being danced at Sileucia ! What would the Crusaders have said to such an innovation ? This organ, and the room built for it, cost about three hundred pounds, and new barrels could be made at pleasure when desired.

Spring brought us all the sweetest-smelling flowers, from violets to tuberoses, and many delicious fruits, as strawberries and the nespoli japonica, or loquat and apricots.

Summer fanned us with cool sea breezes, which one could inhale at will, lolling under the

shade of some broad-spreading lofty tree, and reading of other lands and other days. The luscious melon, the nectarine, and the peach, now poured their abundance upon us. Autumn, with almost cloudless skies, trellised the houses, the gardens, the very hedges, with every variety of the vine, bending with the weight of ripe grapes. Even winter had its harvest, and in the coldest season the rare playqueminia kaki yielded its fresh and inviting fruit, to vary the insipid flavour of preserves.

The natives are always industrious. In winter they stop at home and spin cotton, or weave coarse cloth for their own consumption. In early spring, while attending to their other avocations, they hatch the silk-worm eggs, by carrying them about, wrapped up in cloth, under their arms. When the worms are hatched, they are handed over to the women, who feed them, and their husbands are occupied in gathering leaves for them. As the worm grows larger the labour increases, and by the time that the cocoon is formed, every branch

on every mulberry-tree has been lopped off : the leaves have been devoured by the worms, and the remains of the worms are daily swept up and collected in an empty barn, where they remain till the approaching winter, when this rather unsavoury material is used to feed the oxen with, a provision they devour with avidity. The sprigs and tender boughs are dried and used for fences ; the larger branches answer the purpose of firewood.

There are some superstitious observances, which are strictly adhered to by the peasants employed in rearing the silk-worm. Thus, when the eggs are first hatched, the peasant's wife rises up very early in the morning, and creeping stealthily to the master's house, flings a piece of wet clay against the door. If the clay adheres, it is a sign that there will be a good mousoum or silk harvest : if it do not stick, then the contrary may be expected. During the whole time the worms are being reared, no one but the peasants themselves are permitted to enter the khook or hut ; and, when the worms give notice that they are

about to mount and form their cocoons, then the door is locked, and the key handed to the proprietor of the plantation. After a sufficient time has elapsed, and the cocoons are supposed to be well and strongly formed, the proprietor, followed by the peasants, marches in a kind of procession up to the huts, and, first dispensing a few presents amongst them, and hoping for good, to which they all reply, "Inshalla ! Inshalla !—please God ! please God," the key is turned, the doors thrown wide open, and the cocoons are detached from the battours of cane mats, and prepared for reeling the next day.

The wheel used for reeling is large and of rude construction. The fire is placed in an oven under the basin containing water, and which is made of coarse clay. The water gets hot, and the cocoons are thrown into it when boiling, and beaten with a little bundle of switches till the thread begins to detach itself, when the ends are carefully united and drawn gently towards a peg on the wheel, to which they are fastened. A woman sits ready to turn

the wheel, first slowly, then with increasing velocity. The male peasant attends to the cocoons, knots the broken threads, and keeps stirring them up, supplying fresh cocoons continually from a basket at his side as any are reeled. His daughter is employed fetching water to keep the basin continually full; a boy feeds the fire, and there is always a spare hand to relieve the woman at the wheel.

It is a fine sight at Suedia during the month of May, when all these wheels are whirring merrily away. The peasants look happy and contented, and from morning to night are working and singing in all the glory of a fine spring day. About the end of the month, the mousoum is completed, and the medium quantity of silk produced for market may be reckoned at about seven hundred Turkish cantars, or three hundred and ninety thousand pounds of silk, which selling at twenty thousand piastres per cantar, yields a return of somewhere near one hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds per annum.

The silk mousoum is hardly over, ere the

peasants are occupied reaping the grain harvest. The men reap, and the women and children glean. After the wheat harvest is past, all the gardens and grounds require to be ploughed, and towards the end of July everybody has occupation in the vineyards, which are plentifully spread on the surrounding hills. The grapes are gathered; and quantities are sent to the Antioch market daily for the consumption of the inhabitants, while a portion is converted into wine. Some is distilled into spirit; some is boiled down and becomes beekmaze, a kind of saccharine matter, very much resembling, only infinitely better than molasses, and the remainder of the vine crop is dried as raisins, of which vast quantities are in demand, as the natives subsist almost entirely upon dried fruit and bread during their lengthy and oft-recurring fasts. By October, the mulberry-trees have sprouted out again, and this time the branches are not lopped off; but the leaves are carefully gathered and given to the oxen and cattle, and then the peasant bethinks him of the



approaching winter, and takes the precautions requisite for providing against the wants of man and beast.

He knows to a measure how much wheat is required for his household, and adds a little more for the purposes of hospitality or charity. The women are busy making burgull, boiled wheat dried in the sun, and then ground to a substance like grits. Men are gathering olives, and extracting oil from some, and preserving the rest in salt and water. The sour pomegranate is boiled down into a substance, called nahr bekmaze, an acid much resembling the Indian tamarind, and made to serve for very much the same purposes. Enter a peasant's hut about the middle of November, and you see him in the midst of all these preparations: a mountain of onions is in one corner, round which are jars of various dimensions and ages, containing the household supply of oil, vinegar, wine, spirit, salt, butter, molasses, nahr bekmaze, olives in salt and water, and dried cream-cheese. On strings that are stretched all across

the room, are hung festoons of dry red chilies, garlic, and mint. In a huge deal-box, with a monster padlock, the raisins and dried figs are safely stowed, beyond the reach of the children; and half the cottage is blocked up with firewood. In uncouth-looking baskets, covered with mud and lime, and which, in the dark, look like so many stout men, wrapped up in sheets, the wheat and barley, &c., are kept. The space left to be occupied by the family is not very extensive; but the floor is cleanly swept, and the mattresses are piled one above another all round the hut, and answer the purpose of cushions to lean against. A sheepskin or two is spread here and there, to serve as seats for the more distinguished visitors.

The sun has just gone down, and the night is setting in chilly; so a glorious wood-fire is lit in the fire-place, which imparts a pleasant warmth to all the hut. The peasant and his family are seated in a circle, eating their evening meal—the principal repast of the day—and which consists of a goodly pillauf, made of

burgul, and garnished with divers pickles, with the addition perhaps of a little fried meat or fish. The two cats, and the old dog, are quite distracted by the savoury odour of the feast; and whilst waiting as patiently as they can for the share they are sure to obtain, the old cock, accompanied by his half dozen wives, stalks coolly in, and picking up grains of pillauf *en route*, goes to roost on the top of the pile of fire-wood. The repast is finished; the cows have been milked; and locked up with the rest of the cattle for the night. The peasant has finished his evening pipe; the cottage-door is locked; and darkness has scarcely set in, before the whole family give indisputable signs of their being fast asleep.

Such is the every-day life of the peasant at Suedia—Christian and Fellah, with very little variation. The Christians, who are all of the Greek persuasion, observe rigidly their fast days and feast days; and on Easter Mondays, according to their calendar, the young men, or shebs, collect on the lawn before the house of

Muxi Elias Abdilmessiah, the chief of the native residents, and the only native gentleman in all Syria in his principles and conduct. Mr. Elias witnesses the feats of strength gone through by these active youths, and awards gifts and prizes to the greatest adepts in the art of wrestling. Meanwhile all the pretty village girls, gaily dressed with wreaths of flowers on their head, assemble opposite to his house, and sing and dance in circles for hours. Hadji Euphdokia, the wife of Mr. Elias, bestows on them sweetmeats and trifling presents. The Europeans residing at Suedia usually assemble at Mr. Elias's on this occasion, and spend the whole day in his hospitable mansion. His wife was brought up almost entirely by Mrs. Barker, and possesses many of the amiable qualities of her kind preceptress. She has two daughters, Hadgi Mariam and Cattoor; and one niece, Maroom, all most ladylike in their manners. They can bake, too, though they cannot brew, and have been brought up as excellent housewives—a much better training

for women in the East than useless accomplishments.

The lions to be visited by strangers at Suedia are, first, the ruins of the old port, called by the natives "Mogaiarh." The old port is about two hours very pleasant ride from Suedia, over a fine hard soil, which, even in winter, is seldom muddy. The few traces that remain of its former grandeur are surrounded by a village called Moghior. What was once its dock is now a swampy marsh, in which the natives fish for eeches. There is still, however, in its fragmentary ruins, evidence of its ancient magnificence. The gates are plainly distinguishable, and time has made but little inroad on its immense tunnel, a work marvellous for those days, which was constructed under the mountains for nearly a mile, for the purpose, it is presumed, of carrying into the sea the torrents of water which inundated the plains, when the snow melted on the mountains. At the same time, the pouring of this large body of water into the sea, opposite the entrance to

the dock or port, answered another purpose, the force of the current preventing the waves from accumulating a sand-bank in the channel through which vessels entered. To this day, it is effective in carrying off the rain, and is consequently of great service to the neighbouring villages.

Near the port are the extensive ruins of the ancient city of Sileusia which must have been one of the handsomest and strongest cities in Syria, commanding a delightful and extensive view of the sea, and a land prospect of many miles extent. Here tumuli are abundant, and many have been opened by enterprising travellers; in some few cases successfully. Moghiar is warmer than Suedia, and better suited for the cultivation of exotic. The banana succeeds well here, but it had only been newly introduced, and I left before the season for its yielding fruit arrived. I am persuaded the mangostein would thrive admirably, if well attended to, for the few first years, during the winter. The guava-trees in Mr. Barker's

gardens have absolutely changed their nature, and got as it were acclimated. In India the guava never sheds its leaves; in Suedia during the winter it is as bare as a pole, and rebuds again with the first warmth of spring.

The next place to be visited is the site of the pillar of Simon Stylites. This is about the same distance as the old port is from Suedia. The road is rather stony and mountainous; and when I had traversed it, I found the pillar lying upon the ground in several pieces. It was thrown down by some tremendous earthquake.

Daphne is the next claimant on the strangers attention. *Beit il mai*, or the home of water, as Daphne is called by the Arabs, is a lovely romantic spot, approached through a charming country the whole way from Suedia, and the road from Antioch abounds with picturesque details. Forest and mead, rivulets and streams, succeed each other, while wild roses and jessamine, the oleander and the myrtle, form hedges and impenetrable thickets. Natural

groves and bowers are seen in every direction ; and gaudy butterflies flit about in the air ; birds sing amongst the branches of the trees, and the murmuring of the breeze through the poplar boughs, gives a peaceful charm to the picture. Gradually the voice of many waters swells louder and louder, and a turning in a rocky pass, brings you suddenly upon half a dozen cataracts foaming and roaring and rushing wildly down the little precipice, whence the waters pass into as many mills, and are lost for a time amongst the thick foliage of trees that grow up and amongst the chasms and ravines, but reappear in the distance like so many small rivulets.

It is indeed a fairy-like scene ; but the country around is inhabited by a population so wild and untameable, that few dare build their summer-houses near the spot, except some of the more influential Ayans of Antioch ; and these few, though well guarded, are occasionally assassinated by the wild Fellah tribes that live in the inaccessible nooks of the neighbouring mountains.



There now remains but the modern country seats of the late Mr. Barker, which are well worthy of a day or two's inspection. Huderbeg is an hour's ride from "Suedia Hall." It lies inland and is situated between two hills, on the banks of a small tributary stream which empties itself into the Orontes. This is a garden entirely devoted to fruits. Here are China quinces, double the size of an ostrich egg, and teeming with rich and delightful perfume. The loquat succeeds best here, and so do certain sorts of nectarine and plums. There is a pretty little cottage in the centre of the garden, and a birky or reservoir of crystal water in front of it. Here I once placed my chair under the shade of a remarkable-looking tree, so remarkable that I was led to pluck some of the leaves and smell them, when, to my astonishment, I discovered it was a myrtle-tree, a thing I had never seen or heard of before in the whole course of my many wanderings. In fact, a common myrtle bush has by some extraordinary geniality of the soil, in the course of years become a stately tree,

blossoming and bearing white berries, of which latter the natives are extremely fond, and consider them a delicious fruit.

There are many rare fruits to be found in this garden, and amongst other curious things, a bamboo bush, brought all the way from India. This, however, is evidently not in its proper sphere; for it is withering fast, and by this time I dare say has utterly decayed.

Bitias, the favourite summer retreat of the Barker family, is two or three hours' ride from Suedia. The road up is execrable, for you continue mounting the whole time over rather slippery gravel. Once arrived, however, I was well repaid for my trouble. Here there is a fine summer-house full of accommodations; a garden overrun with delicious flowers; a beautiful jet of water which rises nearly thirty feet, and has such force that it sustains high up in the air the gaily-painted figure of a dancing Dervish, who keeps twirling round and round in a most diverting manner. The reservoir, in the centre of which the jet d'eau plays, is full

of beautiful gold and silver fish, and looking eastward from the elevation on which it stands, you have a bird's-eye view as far as Antioch, and can clearly distinguish the ruined walls on the top of the distant hill. Bitias is celebrated for the salubrity of the air, and the excellence of its water. Mr. Barker's house is built at the fountain-head of the very best spring, and the water is conducted into and through the house itself. Close to the door of entrance, are three handsome marble basins let into the wall; here on turning a tap, the water flows plentifully. It is deliciously cool and grateful to the taste, and has another most rare and agreeable quality; for if, after a hearty meal, you drink a cup of it, half an hour afterwards you begin to imagine that you have been fasting all day, and get so voraciously hungry that you would be ashamed to eat so heartily before others, were it not for the lucky circumstance that all are just in the same situation as yourself.

There is a flight of steps leading up to the spring from which this delicious water exudes.

These steps come out amidst a labyrinth of sweetly-scented roses at the cave in the rock, through which the little stream comes purling out. I was lost in admiration on first viewing this enchanting spot. Before me ran the crystal water; on my right were the ruins of an old Armenian church (for all the inhabitants of Bitias, two thousand in number, are Armenians); on my left, the spring again, and at my feet that beautiful nook, where now lie all the earthly remains of the good old man who planned and constructed these gardens, calmly reposing in their soil.

Our estimable Vice-Consul, Mr. Edward Barker, with his wife and family and widowed mother, are still residing on the estates at Suedia, and few travellers pass that way without partaking of the hospitable cheer of the worthy inmates of Suedia Hall.

Doctor Holt Yates, an English physician, has built a very handsome chateau on a well-chosen spot at Suedia. Latterly a fine silk-reeling factory has been erected by some English gentle-

man, the machinery of which was procured from Europe, and cost about fourteen hundred pounds sterling. . If it is superintended by any person who understands the process, it cannot possibly fail to prove a most lucrative concern.

## CHAPTER IV.

The Route to Aleppo—Setting out—Gessir il Haded—  
The swollen river—An Eastern ford—Gazelles—  
Dana—A knavish Sheik—Ride through the Passes—  
Entrance to Aleppo—Bribing the custom-officer—  
The Gate of Beauty—The three quarters of the  
city—Fortified Khans—Jewish festivals—Money-  
changers.

I BADE farewell to Suedia, and rode on  
towards the capital of Northern Syria. Aleppo  
is three days pleasant journey from Suedia.  
The first stage is through Antioch to Gessir il  
Haded, a distance of about twenty-six miles,  
or, as the Arabs calculate, eight hours' journey.

The second stage is from Gessir il Haded to Dana, about the same distance. The third and last is from Dana to Aleppo, a good ten hours' ride.

I was up with the lark the day of my departure, but there was considerable delay and difficulty in assembling the mules and getting the muleteers in action, as well as in putting my baggage in order. This consisted of a mattress, a camp-bedstead, two boxes, a hat-box, and a basket containing wine, bread, some cold meat, and other indispensables. I thought everything was right, and got into my saddle, when two paper parcels and the tobacco-bag were found to be missing; and down I got again, and lost half an hour before these valuables were brought to light. At last, everything was in its place, and I made a fair and final start.

Birds were singing sweetly in the plantations, bees were humming busily from one sweet flower to another, and the air was scented with fragrance. I ascended briskly one side of the

mountain, and then cautiously stepped down the other, leaving behind Suedia and all its pleasures. Far in advance I saw Antioch, and continued along the serpentine banks of the river for a considerable distance. There is a little tributary stream, called Karachai, which I was obliged to wade through before reaching Antioch. In summer it is an insignificant little rivulet, swarming with fish, something like lampreys. In winter and spring, however, it is sometimes so swollen and rapid, that all intercourse between Suedia and Antioch has been cut off for two or three days at a time.

We passed through Antioch, nodding familiarly, in our way through its streets, to many a well-known face. Hitherto, till we got fairly out of the environs of Antioch, our road was surrounded by the choicest mulberry and fruit gardens, but we diverged into endless plains of rich pasturage, skirting the winding river on either side as far as the eye can reach. Sometimes we came close to the banks of the river ; sometimes were a mile away. At last a little



white speck could be distinguished on the broad expanse. This gradually got larger as we drew nigh, and proved to be the ancient and celebrated bridge of Gessir il Haded, in Arabic signifying the "iron bridge." It was here, and at this very spot, that the early followers of the Prophet, under the Caliph Omar, fought a pitched battle ; and it was then, as now, called the iron bridge, a name which it owes to its position rather than to the materials of which it is composed, which are of stone.

At Gessir il Haded, owing to its being the only outlet from Antioch to Aleppo, there is always a relay of custom-house agents. The bridge is a very strong one, built of a single arch, and at its head is a strong gateway, over which a square room is built, with two windows on each side ; and pass at whatever hour of the day you may, you will most surely see a man stationed at each window, like an owlet on the look out. All beasts of burthen, camels, mules, &c., coming to or from Aleppo, here undergo a strict examination, and should

any one be caught smuggling, the whole of his horse-load is immediately confiscated.

The plains around Gessir il Haded abound at all seasons with game, and that rare bird, the frankolin, is here more plentiful than in any other part of Syria. The sportsmen of Aleppo make up parties to meet here, and the worst shot generally manages to fill his bag.

In February, the Orontes overflows these plains for a distance of some miles, and even parts of the bridge are under water. On one occasion I crossed the bridge when it was in this state. For three hours our horses were up to their haunches in water, and so perilous was the undertaking, owing to dykes and ditches in parts unknown to strangers, that we were compelled to have several villagers to act as guides, and each horse had a man walking on either side, to prevent its slipping, and being carried away by the current.

The road from Gessir il Haded is extremely picturesque. For the first few hours we passed over green hillocks covered with cattle, with

gipsy encampments interspersed at intervals. Then descending into the plains, I arrived at the new and thriving settlement of Yengi Chiech or "The New Farm," a small settlement, as it were, formed by Osman Pasha of Aleppo in 1844. Extensive mulberry plantations now thrive here, and cotton-plants begin to yield a lucrative crop. One stately building, the residence of the Pasha's Nazir, or Steward, rises in striking contrast to the small yet neat houses of the villagers, and in the clear rapid stream that flows close under the Nazir's house, are swarms of fine-looking ducks and geese. Travellers generally halt here to partake of some refreshment, and then proceeding, pass over extensive plains, and defile through a range of mountains, the sides and little valleys being highly cultivated by the Turcoman tribe. Towards evening we approached an old ruined town, parts of which, however, are in very good condition. Some of the beams laid across the houses are one entire piece of stone; and the different variegated stones of which the build-

ings themselves are composed, give them a singular appearance.

After leaving this place, we passed several ruined towns and temples on the surrounding hills, encompassing this fruitful valley ; and ever and anon discerned small herds of the delicate and dark-eyed gazelles, flitting rapidly across from one mountain-side to another.

About sunset we reached Dana, a considerable village, peopled entirely by Fellahs, and where travellers usually alight at the sheik's house. This said sheik who is the greatest rogue in the whole pashalik, receives Europeans with civility, 'because he can manage to cheat them in procuring the requisites for the night's supper, and the morrow's breakfast. He is also much addicted to pilfering, and if he can lay his hand upon a handkerchief, a pen-knife, or a tobacco-bag, be sure that your time is only lost in searching for them on your departure. This worthy, against whom I would caution all travellers, on one occasion of my partaking of his *hospitality*, having secured

from me in advance, as he is wont, the current value of a fowl, which I had expressed a wish to have for supper, assembled some of his neighbours to join with him in lamenting over its fatness. "Why the fat," said he, "is streaming from its side. Is it not a pity?—did any one ever see a fowl like that sold to a Frank for two piastres?" The process of cooking, however, went on, and not a morsel did we leave for the envious and ill-conditioned sheik.

From Dana to Aleppo—our last day's stage—the road was long and wearisome. In an hour after leaving Dana, we quitted the plains, and commenced ascending interminable rugged hills, the horse picking his pathway amongst massive pieces of rock, which threatened every instant to break our knees. This kind of work continued for about three hours, when we fondly imagined that we had at length attained the very summit, and would now have to ride along a level surface till we should reach Aleppo. But we were shortly undeceived ; for, coming on a sudden descent, gradual, but apparently

endless, we were alternately mounting and descending for a couple of hours longer. By this time the sun was scorching, and the stony and rocky ground over which we were travelling, emitted an almost tangible hot vapour—so hot that it nearly stifled us. At length, the highest point of the mountains was really gained; and before us lay one uninterrupted plain as far as eye could reach, where, after a long, anxious look, we got at last a glimpse of the yet distant city. But we had still to traverse the vast plain, so illusive in its distances, and which, on that hot sultry day, when the earth was parched and the air scorching, so that it actually peeled the skin off our faces, seemed to have no end. At length, we passed a camel, two or three donkeys, and an old man going home to Dana—some faint indications that we were nearing that famed city of Aleppo, though, in our despair, we had almost come to the resolution of dismounting and lying flat down on the scorching ground—so completely were we overcome with fatigue.

Still the deceptive horizon seemed as far off as ever, when suddenly we discovered, at the foot of a hill we were approaching, the castle and city of Haleb, with its hundred minarets and fifty domes ; its countless hummums, and endless houses, peeping over and under and through the celebrated bestans (gardens) of Kittab.

The first person I met on nearing the gate of Aleppo was the Goomrokyee, or custom's officer, and he instantly requested a buckshish, or present. I gave him a few piastres, and he then suffered my luggage to pass unmolested. I next came upon a very fine house, which belonged to Mr. Edward Barker, our Vice-Consul at Suedia, and occupies the best situation in Aleppo. This part is called Kittab, and the houses are suburban villas, belonging chiefly to gentlemen of Aleppo. I passed over a little bridge, and leaving the large range of gardens to my left, arrived at the Bab il Farage, or Gate of Beauty—why so called I am at a loss to surmise ; for I never observed anything

in the gate itself to justify such a name ; and the old women who sit there, perpetually begging, are equally devoid of attractions.

This gate is guarded by a subaltern and some twenty Turkish soldiers. The subaltern, except in the depth of winter, may be usually seen in his shirt sleeves, deeply engaged in investigating the contents of a basket of mulberries. The soldiers, all except the one actually on duty, are either asleep on the stone benches, or amusing themselves by going through the sword exercise, to the delight and admiration of some young Turkish damsels, who are peeping through the trellised windows of a house next door.

On passing the Gate of Beauty, I was launched into the very heart of the busy hum and bustle of Aleppine life. Grave old fellows in long amber and pea-green robes, with immense kalpaks on their heads, were trotting backwards and forwards on their sleek white donkeys. These kalpak-wearers are a select and privileged race, licensed by the Sultan to



make objects of themselves in great tall caps, vastly resembling in form and size those worn by dunces at schools. This, however, exempts them from certain taxes and tithes to which other native Christians are subjected.

If a traveller happen to be a stranger in Aleppo, he goes to the convent: if acquainted with the people, either some hospitable friend insists on his taking up his abode with him, or he arranges for board and lodging with some native Aleppine family, and this last in my opinion is by far the best plan; for the Aleppines are all polite and hospitable, and for a very small remuneration, delighted to receive Englishmen, and to entertain them with attention and civility.

Aleppo may be said to be divided into three distinct quarters—Jedaida, that portion inhabited entirely by the native population, both Turks and Christians; the Jewish quarter; and Kittab, in which the European families live. Kittab has only been built since the earthquake of 1822, and originally contained not more

than three or four houses, constructed expressly to provide against a similar misfortune to that just caused by the calamitous earthquake. It is now becoming very much enlarged, and contains some very handsome modern structures, one of the handsomest of which is the property of our worthy and hospitable Consul, Mr. N. W. Werry.

The English, and other merchants, reside in town, or have their offices in the khans, strongly-built squares, situated in the centre of the town and amongst the bazaars, and protected by massive gates, which would almost withstand the attack of a besieging army. The Khan Halibia, or the Aleppine Square, is one of the handsomest and strongest. It is approached through three bazaars, each of which has massive gates on either side. These, in addition to the gates of the khans, form almost an impregnable barrier. Even if besiegers broke in through every obstacle, the tenants of the houses situated in these khans have easy means afforded them for escape, as the flat

roofs of the lofty houses of the town have doors of communication between them, and if a marauder were searching a man's house with the intention of cutting the master's throat, he would scarce have time to search one room before the object of his search would have got a mile away, by scrambling over terraces and vaulted bazaars. The Khan Halibia has been very much embellished by Signor Vincenzo Marcopoli, the wealthiest merchant and most charitable man in all Aleppo. One entire side of the square is occupied by the magnificent palace of this gentleman.

There is a Jewish festival in the autumn, which is very religiously observed by the more wealthy Israelites of Aleppo, and the season is scrupulously required to be passed in the open air, with no other canopy than the heavens. The climate, however, about this time is very changeable, and the nights so intensely cold, that the poorer Jews have been compelled to relinquish the ceremonial. Not so the wealthy, who have little wooden cabins covered in with

glass, so as not to intercept the view of the stars, at the same time that they protect them from all inclemency of weather.

A day or two before the feast, these little portable houses are brought forth from the magazines, where they have lain undisturbed for the previous twelve months, and the glass being well dusted, the wood-work freshly painted, and the whole carefully packed and placed upon mules, they are dispatched with the necessary furniture and appendages under the care of a faithful servant, to be erected on some chosen spot, which is generally a secluded one, and out of the beat and track of Christians and Turks.

When the cabins are erected, they form a curious temporary Hebrew village, a village which springs up suddenly amidst a wild desolation, and is for the space of three days and three nights inhabited by a population of nearly two hundred men, women and children. A vast quantity of lambs are slaughtered, and other edibles prepared, which are eaten "in

haste," and a great many chapters of the Talmud are rehearsed by long-bearded Rabbis, with their heads covered and their shoes off. At night they lie in bed gazing at the stars. When the three days and three nights have expired, the company of star-gazers come back to Aleppo, when it occasionally happens that some of the old people have fallen into a state verging on apoplexy from excessive feeding, and indigestion; and not a few of the young men fall into a state of despondency, in consequence of being separated from the damsels who were to them the chief attractions of the festival.

In Aleppo monetary business can only be transacted four days in the week. On Thursday a banker gives you a cheque on a Turkish Seraf or money-changer; you go to the money-changer's on Friday, and, to your consternation, find the shutters up and the door closed, very alarming symptoms to a stranger. You hasten back to the banker, with dismay depicted in your countenance, half expecting to find that he

has shut up also ; when, laughing at your trepidation, he informs you that you should have gone to the money-changer yesterday, as this is the Mahometan Sabbath, and consequently all business is suspended. However, he is so obliging as to give you a draft on a Jew, in lieu of the other one, and recommends you to get it cashed at once. Loitering about the bazaars, and attracted by many novel spectacles, you quite forget all about the cheque till it is too late for business hours, and so go home, consoling yourself with the idea that you have all to-morrow before you. The morrow arrives, and you are punctual this time, but the Jew's office, like the Turk's, is securely closed, and you begin to fear that you have fallen into some diabolical trap. You go to the banker, and request an explanation, when you are reminded that Saturday is the Jew's Sabbath ; and Sunday being the Christian's, you must wait till Monday for your money.

## CHAPTER V.

Route from Latachia to Aleppo—Gessir el Shoor—El Chaddir—Turkish Café—The Muleteer's home—Aleppo and its bazaars—Asylum for cats—Consular politeness—Aleppine pic-nics—British merchants—General Bem—The call to prayer.

ON a former visit to Aleppo I had come direct from Latachia. The road, though far more tedious and longer than those from Scanderoon and Suedia, was extremely picturesque, and at that particular season, the autumn, in which I performed the journey, very agreeable. The vineyards, which extended in one uninterrupted line from Latachia to Gessir el Shoor,

were laden with ripe fruit, which was offered for sale at little temporary stalls, erected at intervals of an hour's distance from each other, and where also a profusion of melons, water-melons, cucumbers, and fresh goat's milk could be procured.

The first day's stage, on going from Aleppo to Latachia, is a small Turcoman encampment, distant seven hours' ride. This place has no other name than that of El Chadder, or The Tents. Travellers pitch their own tents for better security ; the sheik or head man of the encampment being responsible for their safety. The second day's stage is Gessir el Shoor, distant eleven hours' ride from El Chadder. After a hard day's work, however, I was gratified by arriving at one of the prettiest villages in Syria, situated on the banks of a beautiful river. There I found a coffee-house in a delightful situation ; and thither I sauntered to smoke a cool narghileh. In the interior of the *café*, the walls of which had been newly whitewashed and decorated in Oriental style,



my attention was attracted to what I supposed to be one of those gaily-coloured French daubs, in narrow tinsel frames, so much admired in the Levant, which generally bear such euphonious inscriptions as Maria Theresa, Angelique, Céleste, &c. The Turkish caffegée observing my eye on the picture, which was, in truth, the pride of his heart, took it down from the nail, and handed it to me for closer inspection, exclaiming with exultation, “Mashalla peik Guzelle!—Praise Heaven, how beautiful!” What was my surprise on discovering that it was a picture of the Virgin Mary, which this Moslem had picked up for a trifle at Aleppo, and brought away in triumph to this out-of-the-way village, there to adorn the walls of his *café*.

The next stage from Gessir el Shoor is twelve hours ; a long and weary ride, through lofty and precipitous mountains. At nightfall the traveller, fatigued and harassed, reaches Daher l’el Cattergu, the muleteer’s home. This hospitable old Turk, who was my muleteer, insisted on my stopping at his house during

the night. I remained there, and he feasted me upon the fat of the land. Though all the inhabitants of this village are Turks, they are by no means fanatical, and their women not only go unveiled, but fearlessly enter into conversation with strangers. This is owing, I found, from the men being in continual communication with the Europeans both of Aleppo and Latachia; and the women and children of this village often get a lift to both these places, when the mules happen to be going there unladen. It was as great a treat to them, as it might be to a farmer's wife and daughters in Yorkshire to be brought up to London. The last stage is six hours' easy riding, thus forming a total distance of thirty-six hours, from Aleppo to Latachia.

The bazaars of Aleppo are thought to be the handsomest and best supplied in all Turkey, after Constantinople itself. They are all vaulted, and of vast extent, tempting the stranger to the purchase of many rare Eastern productions and manufactures displayed in them for sale.

But the time to see these bazaars to best advantage, is during the three nights of the festival of the Beiram, at which period they are brilliantly illuminated with various coloured lamps, and thronged by an immense concourse of gaily-dressed people. The whole bazaar smells of spices and rich perfumes, and some of the sweetmeats displayed for sale are both inviting to the eye and delicious to the taste. The *cafés* are then in the zenith of popularity, the best Aleppine musicians are performing in their best style, and the famous Hadjik Bashi, the Jullien and Weippert of Aleppo, astounds the assembled multitude with his noisy strains, executed on a cracked violin.

I was surprised in my wanderings through the bazaars and streets, at the frequent appearance of men staggering under weighty bags, filled as I found with cats and kittens of all ages and sizes. That the cats were alive was indubitable, as their caterwauling evinced ; and I could but surmise that the wretched animals were destined for the supply of some vile cook-

shop, there to be sold to the hungry customers in the shape of the ever-suspicious sausage, or in Turkish stews. But I was quite mistaken. The destination of these cats was a mosque, which included a kind of hospital or poor-house erected for the benefit of destitute cats, by some charitable and wealthy Mussulman of Aleppo, who had not only gone to the expense of building the mosque, but left a large sum for its endowment, part of which was to be devoted to the purchase of food for such of the feline race as had grown too old to forage for themselves. Notwithstanding the number of cats daily admitted into the mosque, dead ones are no common sight in Aleppo.

There are an unusual number of influential Jews in Aleppo, which may be designated the head quarters of the Jewish aristocracy in the Levant. The Consul-Generals and Consuls of Austria, Russia, Sweden, Holland, Tuscany and America, are not only all of the Hebrew persuasion, but all members of the same family. Among these last recited officials, there is of

course a vast display of consular dignity, and on high-days and feast-days very pompous processions are to be met, in which cocked hats and silver-headed sticks figure conspicuously. On calling upon a certain Consul on one of these occasions, I was received with the utmost form and state, and ushered through a perfect suite of rooms into the grand reception hall. Massive narghilehs were produced, and coffee, served on coffee-cup holders of filagree gold and silver work. The conversation was conducted with decorum and dignity, and, adopting the general rule, I commenced and finished every sentence with Signor Consoli Generale. Finally I took my leave, when the etiquette practised was most imposing, and I had to bow myself out of the door of the reception hall to the door of the next room, where I was obliged to turn round and make another low reverence, which was duly returned by Signor Consoli Generale. Thus we proceeded through the whole suite of rooms, the Consul-General being always just one door behind me. On reaching the top of the steps I turned once

more to face the "illustrissimo Signor," who was at the end of the corridor, and then hurried to the bottom of the steps, when, lo! he was at the top. The last thing I saw as I rushed out of the gate, was the bulky old Hebrew in the act of regaining an upright position, after a farewell obeisance.

The *soi-disant* Europeans are a very gay set, and exceedingly fond of garden parties in fine weather, and *réunions* and balls in the winter. The garden-parties, or pic-nics, commence a little after sunrise, when the guests, and those who give the invitations, assemble at some fixed rendezvous in one of the many public gardens close to Kittab. All kinds of baskets are brought upon donkeys. Some contain the breakfast, others the uncooked materials for dinner; one the wine; another fruit or sweetmeats; and from a third, the form and purpose of which sadly puzzles a stranger, some young married lady carefully produces a little red baby, wrapped up in swaddling clothes. Coffee is made on the spot; and the

operations of the day commence by an onslaught on the breakfast. Much true enjoyment and unalloyed happiness reign at that hour, and right merry and clear is the laugh of many a young Aleppine damsel. When all have done eating, everybody begins to smoke—ladies and all. These latter confine themselves to the narghileh; the men have pipes and cigars. When coffee is introduced, the young mothers have their infants brought to them; and the numerous donkeys, who, have till now been waiting patiently, begin to bray discordantly till they obtain their breakfast. The Arabic music, which is always in attendance, now strikes up. There is generally a wretched attempt, by some melancholy lady, at executing some doleful national air, which is applauded violently. Then some of the men bawl out an impassioned love story, and about mid-day dancing commences. Arabic dancing is a very different affair from what is generally expressed by that term. One might go through its measures and figures on the hottest day in

the Torrid Zone, and be none the worse for the exercise, so solemn, so sedate, and so dignified are its movements.


About three P.M. dinner is served, and ample justice done to it by all parties. Gentlemen, who have taken guns with them, then set up a mark, and fire at it valiantly, till a very wrathful old Turk who is at the wrong side of the garden, miraculously escapes being shot through the head, on which a fierce altercation ensues, and the offenders decamp. In this way the pleasures of the day usually terminate. When they are safe at home, the Aleppine gentlemen propose bastinadoing the Turk who had interrupted their "kaif" or pleasuring, but the women interfere, and the affair is suffered to drop.

When I was at Aleppo, Mr Werry gave some very pleasant evening-parties in his commodious new house at Kittab. The old ladies, half Aleppine, half Frank, sat in a row, smoking narghilehs, and speculating on matches



for their unmarried daughters. The young ones danced and flirted. Even the polka was got up and very well executed. Then we had Arabian music and Arabian songs, and a little Arabian dancing ; and English, French, and Italian songs ; quadrilles and waltzes. After this, trays of most inviting refreshments were served round with wines and liqueurs, and were sipped by Aleppine ladies, and approved of and sipped again. After a pleasant evening, all parted, well pleased with their entertainment, and with each other.

About eighty years ago, Aleppo is said to have contained upwards of twenty British houses of commerce, and even up to the dissolution of the Levant Company, there were still many established there. The number has, however, been rapidly decreasing, and at the present day but two English merchants reside at Aleppo. Its commerce with Great Britain, however, has been steadily increasing, and is still improving, though it is almost entirely in the



hands of Greek and other foreign merchants. Still, its exports to England are very limited, and consist chiefly of scammony, and gall-nuts, and Persian berries.

Large caravans belonging to wealthy Bagdad and Bussorah merchants arrive annually at Aleppo, bringing spices and Indian produce to barter for European goods. It often happens that an entire ship's cargo has been sold to these merchants, before the vessel's arrival at Alexandretta, and on such occasions, the poor factors at Alexandretta are worried and plagued out of their lives, till the whole of the goods have been safely landed, and despatched to Aleppo.

The climate of Aleppo is, upon the whole, a very salubrious one. Fevers of a virulent kind sometimes rage in the more obscure and filthy portions of the town, but Europeans are seldom subjected to their influence, though new arrivals almost invariably pay the tribute, which is levied on them in the shape of one

attack, after which they are almost proof to infection. The Aleppo button, a singular boil, or blain, to which all sexes and ages are more or less exposed, is peculiar to this city. It is very harmless in its nature, though inconvenient from the length of time it remains an open sore, sometimes extending over twelve months. For six months it enlarges and gets worse ; and it takes six months to heal up, or dry. No remedies are ever applied to check it in its course, or attempts made to hinder its expansion. Among the belles of Aleppo, some of whom are extremely beautiful, there are few who do not bear on either cheek the indelible mark of this ruthless button. Every native of Aleppo has had it, and every child born there is sure at some time to bear its scar. Nor do the European residents escape, though, strange to say, it never, in their cases, attacks the face, but usually the wrists and ankles.

In winter the cold is intense, but it is a fine, dry, healthy, bracing cold, and the ground

is scarcely ever damp, so that some of the Aleppine exquisites, who are bird-killers as well as lady-killers, issue forth in pumps or slippers in search of woodcocks, and return before breakfast with dry feet, and with a dozen or more delicious birds.

On my last visit to Aleppo, I encountered *en route*, at Antioch, the brave old General Bem, accompanied by some of his courageous companions-in-arms. They were then so strictly guarded by a troop of Turkish cavalry, that I had hardly a chance of even speaking to them. Subsequently, however, in Aleppo, I spent many an agreeable hour in their society, and the more I became acquainted with them, the more I had occasion to admire their courage and patience under misfortune, and their talents and gentlemanly bearing. Major Shaubenburg and myself became almost inseparable friends. He was the beau-ideal of a soldier and a gentleman—six feet six in height and an herculean frame. The pavement rang again under his manly

tread, and the miserable Turkish soldiers made way for him, exclaiming involuntarily, as he passed, *Mashalla !*

General Bem and his staff soon put the Turkish troops stationed at Aleppo into good order and discipline. They were drilled and paraded and reviewed without a day's intervention; and the band, under the tuition of a Hungarian band-master, began to play in a style that would have done no discredit to some of our own regiments of the line.

The artillery were out at ball practice, and fired away more powder in three weeks than had previously been expended at Aleppo in as many years; and the Pasha turned up his eyes, and held up his hands, in astonishment and dismay, at what he supposed such reckless waste of the Sultan's ammunition.

Perhaps one of the most remarkable features in Aleppo, is the call to prayer from the minarets of its numerous mosques. The voices of some of the Imauns who perform on these oc-

casions are, when heard on a still summer morning, remarkably beautiful and musical. Boys of from twelve to sixteen are employed for this purpose by some of the mosques, whilst the others have chosen men with mellow rich bass voices, and the mingling together of these in the air, produces a rich cadence, which is much admired by the faithful.

Near one of these many mosques, all that remains of General Bem, except his fame—the renowned artillery officer of the Polish revolutions, the intrepid General of the Hungarian struggle, the palmer, and lastly the unfortunate renegade, Murad Pasha—lies interred in an obscure Moslem burial-place.

Bem declared that he accepted the Mahometan faith, after the Hungarian struggle, solely in the hope that he might thereby have the best chance of meeting once more in the field the implacable foes of his country, the Russians. But no hostilities occurred on that occasion between Russia and the Porte, and Russia is

but too well avenged in the result. Bern is dead, which is better for them than a victory ; and alas ! nominally at least, he died a Mahometan.

## CHAPTER VI.

Revolt at Aleppo — Massacre of Christians — Arab rapine—Abdallah Bey—Adventure of three Europeans—An Arab tragedy—Turkish injustice—Attack on the city—The Hungarian Refugees—Rescue of the Christians—The European Consuls.

IN the autumn of 1850 the quiet monotony which generally prevails among the residents of Aleppo, was disturbed by a sudden and most unexpected irruption of Arab outlaws, marshalled alike against their lives and their property. Many families who had amassed considerable wealth, even possessing memorials



of the epoch when the traffic of India passed through Aleppo and Alexandretta, were by this sanguinary and diabolical revolt reduced to comparative poverty. Many fair and innocent Greek girls fell victims to their wicked rapine, and young mothers yielded up life rather than forfeit their honour. Neither age nor sex was spared, and the insurgents butchered both the patriarch and the infant.

It was no mere love of plunder or violence, that incited the wild people of the desert to this atrocious act. There had long been a suppressed rancour in their breasts, which only wanted a spark to kindle into flames. I really believe that they were led on and secretly encouraged in their heinous outbreak, by the cunning old chief, Abdallah Bey, who for many years acted as a rebel, and was at one time openly condemned as such. Yet he was permitted to remain Governor of Aleppo, because the Porte, in its feebleness, had not the means or authority to bring him to an account for his oft-repeated atrocities.

Night had closed in on the quiet inhabitants of that portion of Aleppo called Jedidah, principally occupied by unoffending Christians and respectable Turkish merchants, when at a given signal the band of marauders commenced their work of cruelty, and many a poor inoffensive creature, awakened by the shrill heart-rending cry of human agony, which burst forth in every direction, saw the light of day no more.

The European residents who occupied houses in the outskirts of the town, in fear and trembling sought refuge in the strong consolidated buildings, called khans or caravansaries, which are situated in the centre of the town; and some of the more courageous men, Messrs. Werry and Lesseps, the English and French Consuls, rode in at the peril of their lives amongst the assassins, and snatched many a poor girl and mother from their loathsome clutches. The Pasha, a man hitherto supposed to possess no mean influence over the populace, was the first to find his position so perilous as to compel him to abdicate instantly, and fly for

protection to the strongly-fortified citadel in the centre of the town, where, with only fifty resolute followers, he endeavoured to resist the efforts of the rebels to dispossess him of all authority, and despoil the city of its wealth, sacrificing at the shrine of their avarice the lives and property of every European and Christian resident, and not a few of the Moslems themselves, who strenuously resisted the attack of the Arabs, aimed as it was against their own homes and offices, as much as against those of others.

Most strange to say, no Jew suffered persecution in this fearful outburst of fanaticism, which swept over all other creeds. At the time a tale was bruited about as to the origin of the insurrection, which, if true, would cast eternal infamy on the heads of the Hebrew population; but I am inclined to think that it was without foundation, and merely sprang from the malignant prejudices of some calumniators of the persecuted race.

It so happened that, some month or two before the revolt, three young gentlemen re-

siding at Aleppo, Messrs. Gibb, Villecroze, and Mortin, chanced to be by accident in one of the gardens in the environs of Aleppo. It was on Sunday afternoon, and at that time shoals of people are to be met with in these gardens, enjoying themselves under the cool refreshing shade of the walnut-tree, and listening to the hum of the many rivulets and mills in the neighbourhood. Three Bedouins approached the unsuspecting trio of Europeans, who, absorbed by their pleasant manillas, paid not the slightest attention to their appearance—by no means uncommon in Aleppo. When, however, they had arrived within a certain distance, the Bedouins raised their lances, and made a furious charge on the astounded citizens, who had barely time to vault into their saddles before the enemy was close upon them, and in hot pursuit. None can say what might have been the result, had not what eventually proved a fortunate event occurred, which took off the attention of the pursuers, and enabled at least two of the fugitives to get off Scot free.

Young Mortin, who had omitted, or been unable, in the hurry and suddenness of the affair, to draw tight the girths of his saddle (which, in accordance with an invariable Oriental usage, he had loosened on descending from his horse) forgetting that his only chance of keeping his seat depended upon his maintaining a perfect equilibrium, turned back in his saddle to see what progress the enemy were making, and had no sooner made the attempt than the saddle, slipping round, sent him sprawling upon the ground, and he became an easy captive. The first man lifted his lance, and aimed it deliberately at the head of the unfortunate young man, who in another instant must have been killed, had not a most providential incident occurred to save him. This was the stumbling of the Arab's mare, just as he was in the very act of launching the javelin or lance from his grasp, and the result was, that his aim fell short, and he toppled over the horse's head. Ever a most superstitious people, this event was an all-sufficient omen to spare the life of their helpless

victim, which they accordingly did, contenting themselves with plundering him of his clothes and every article he was possessed of, commencing with his hat and finishing with his boots. They left him in this unenviable condition in broad daylight, and with a certainty of encountering swarms of friends and acquaintances.

Fearing that the plunderers might repent their leniency, and return and run him through, young Mortin betook himself to his heels, and ran with might and main towards the principal entrance of the city, where he presented to the astounded gaze of the soldiers and officer on guard, as also to legions of spectators passing to and fro, the strange spectacle of a modest and opulent Frank rushing through a crowded thoroughfare perfectly nude. His story was soon told, and one lent him a chak, another a shawl, a third his donkey, and in this Quixotic attire, he had the pleasure of passing through several crowded streets, with a herd of anxious inquisitive acquaintance at his heels, to the gate-

way of his father's house, where the astonishment and alarm of his family at his indecorous and apparently mad proceedings were only equalled by their gratitude and delight when they were informed of his adventures.

In the interval, the two other gentlemen who had escaped unharmed, spread a report of his assassination far and wide. The brave and lamented old Hungarian General Bem, who was then quartered at the barracks, on receiving the intelligence, set forth in pursuit of the marauders, accompanied by a troop of Turkish lancers. But before they could arrive at the scene of action, the wretches who had despoiled young Mortin, falling across two young Greek brothers, residing at Aleppo, who were richly clad, and had watches and jewellery about them, but who most unfortunately chanced to be on foot, made a furious onslaught upon them. The Greeks endeavoured to defend themselves by throwing stones at the two ruffians, but they were overpowered, and the result was that these two poor fellows—who were both affianced to rich

young brides in Aleppo, were killed. Their bodies were picked up in the course of the day, completely riddled with pistol shots, and frightfully hacked with lance and sabre wounds.

General Bem succeeded during the week in capturing, I believe, all three of the offenders, and it is only to be lamented that he did not take the law into his own hands, and have the culprits shot out of hand, in lieu of bringing them into town, and delivering them up to the Pasha and his Turkish gaolers ; for a few days afterwards a report was spread that the villains had effected their escape. It soon became notorious, however, that their liberty had been accorded them by the Pasha himself, he having been intimidated by the insinuations and threats of Abdallah Bey, on the one hand, and bribed and bought over on the other. Thus the miscreants returned unharmed to their wild brethren of the desert, and the friends of the ill-fated Greeks were left to obtain redress as they best could. There was no means of establishing



any charge against the Pasha, and no use in complaining, and the affair was permitted to pass, like many another heinous crime, without further notice.

From this moment, the Arabs grew daily bolder and more adventurous, assured that they had a wily and powerful supporter in Abdallah Bey ; and they only awaited a favourable opportunity to wreak on the city the whole fury of their fierce and detestable passions. This soon presented itself, and nothing could have been more seasonable for them than the weak and insane measures adopted by the local authorities just before the outbreak.

If there is one thing a Turk dislikes above another in the practices of his Government, it is their method of enlisting soldiers ; and there can be no stronger proof of this, than the fact of the Turks having, under the Egyptian sway, actually maimed and disfigured themselves, in order to preclude the possibility of their being enforced into the military service. In spite of these precautions, young men are

seized and carried off hundreds of miles from their native villages, to which, in all probability, they never come back, though, as Asiatics marry young, often leaving behind a young wife and a child, whose support in life depended upon their exertions. On joining the army, they are at once plunged into a vortex of guilt and sin, by mixing with companions who have grown old in crime, and are forced to undergo every act of petty barbarity that the junior Turkish officers and non-commissioned officers please to inflict upon them. This is certainly sufficient reason to deter even a serf from embracing a profession, which in lieu of being honourable and distinguished, as in other countries, renders him at once infamous and miserable.

Nor is it to be wondered at that the Turkish soldier, perpetually subjected to such sufferings, becomes, in course of time, utterly callous and inhuman, impervious to all the better feelings of nature, and a terror to the community. The soldier under the Egyptian rule, is, if possible,

treated even worse, and is less regularly paid than when in the employment of the Porte. Ibrahim Pasha having discovered that many of his subjects, to avoid service in the army, actually deprived themselves of one of their eyes, caused a whole regiment to be raised, composed entirely of such persons, and the fame of this one-eyed regiment spread far and wide through the East.

At the period of the Aleppo revolt, enlistment was in full operation all over Syria. Many young Turks had been entrapped at Aleppo by the wary soldiery, who were at that period in considerable force, and any resistance on the part of the inhabitants would have been fruitless. But the case was very different at Damascus, where, aided by the mountainers of the Lebanon, the citizens harrassed the soldiery to such a degree, that the whole of the cavalry and infantry in Aleppo, with the exception of two or three hundred sickly, half-starved men, were obliged to be marched to their relief. Thus the city was left unprotected,

and the moment had arrived when the wild sons of the desert could, without much risk, fall upon its inhabitants, and such of the Turkish population as had their passions exasperated by the forcible enlistment of their sons and other connections, into a hateful service, were only too eager to join them. The whole burst like an avalanche on the unsuspecting citizens of Aleppo. As already stated, the Pasha, after ineffectual attempts to quell the riot, was obliged to take refuge in the citadel. The brave Hungarian refugees with a handful of chosen men, kept the rebels at bay, and protected that part of the town where the armoury was situated, and which, had it been captured, would have led to the utter destruction of every Christian inhabitant. Possibly the Jews, and even a portion of the more respectable Turks, would then have fallen victims to the fury of the conquerors. But the cool intrepidity and unshaken discipline of the Europeans could not be overcome, and this little band of Hungarians repelled its host of assailants, while the

Pasha, with more than half the town to back him, was so blockaded and hemmed in, that he was glad to enter into a capitulation, and to abdicate his post in favour of Abdallah Bey. The latter instantly assumed the government of the Pashalik, and invited all the European Consuls resident in Aleppo to attend him, that he might obtain their advice in the trying position he was placed in, but at the same time was secretly plotting the massacre of the whole Christian populace.

Messengers on horse and foot had been despatched on the very first morning of the outbreak to all the authorities at Beyrout, Damascus, Latachia, and Alexandretta, to report the perilous position of the native and European Christians, and implore immediate succour. Nothing could exceed the consternation and surprise of the whole inhabitants of Northern Syria. Damascus, itself the field of insurrection, could ill afford to spare any of the troops it had drained from Aleppo. The refractory mountaineers in the vicinity of Beyrout spoke

openly of revolt, and during the panic that reigned, the garrison there were under arms day and night. Thus they could hold out no hopes of assistance to the unhappy people of Aleppo; and Latachia, to which they turned next, was very poorly garrisoned, while her citizens were too prone to follow the example of insurrection to admit of the troops being removed. Indeed, the Christians in Latachia held themselves ready for momentary flight on the first receipt of the alarming intelligence; and at Antioch, and the whole line of villages intervening, they were alike prepared for the worst. In this uncertainty, day after day passed, and still the same apprehensions prevailed; but the fact was, though panting for the moment, not one of the many towns and villages would join the insurrection till the success of Abdallah Bey should be beyond all doubt, when they would all be only too willing to acknowledge his rule.

I leave the reader to imagine what must have been the sensations of the unfortunate

Christian populace of Aleppo during this long interval. With no chance of succour at hand, and all hope of escape cut off, while death and dishonour were at their doors, they could only trust to the all-powerful arm of the Almighty, and in His own time, He effected their deliverance.

Meanwhile, the insurgents continued their feasting and debauchery, perpetrating the most villainous actions, and indulging in every possible excess. The unhappy Christians, immured in their stronghold in the khans, mounted the lofty terraces of the houses, from which they could survey the whole surrounding country, and eagerly gazed over the vast extent of plain, hoping to discern some indications of approaching succour. Day after day were they doomed to disappointment, and they were seen by their enemies, raising their hands despairingly to Heaven, while the air resounded with their lamentations.

But all these things were destined to have an end. The Damascus troubles having been

quelled, troops were dispatched to the relief of Aleppo. The Sublime Porte sent a force by sea to Alexandretta, whence it proceeded to Aleppo, and arrived there almost simultaneously with that sent from Damascus. The city was immediately invested, and after a fierce resistance on the part of the rebels, carried by storm. As the gallant victors, headed by their brave European general, rushed in at the gates, shouts of joy and thankfulness rose from the redeemed Christians. The bells in the Catholic churches pealed in triumph; the better disposed Turkish inhabitants proclaimed from the tops of the minarets their happy deliverance; the gates of the khans were thrown open; and the grateful populace returned in gladness to their respective homes. Bazaars and magazines were re-opened, and within twelve hours after the entry of the troops, the city assumed its usual every-day appearance.

The ring-leaders of the revolt were either shot or cut down in the action, or were taken prisoners, and sent under strong escort to Con-



stantinople. Abdallah Bey died, *en route*, very shortly after partaking of some coffee, which, report said, contained something more than the dregs at the bottom of the cup. Be this as it may, it is very certain that by his death the Porte has been freed from a most troublesome and rebellious subject, and Aleppo delivered from the rule of a most iniquitous tyrant, who, for many years, was the bane of the place, and particularly inimical to Europeans. The Pasha was dismissed, and was succeeded by a man of great eminence, who was formerly ambassador from the Sublime Porte to the Court of St. James's. His advent was at first hailed by the inhabitants with acclamations, and he gave universal satisfaction; but, alas! like all other pashas, he has, they say, sadly degenerated, and spurns the claims of many of the unfortunate sufferers who lost their all in the disastrous revolt.

In Syria, as indeed is the case all over Turkey, certain privileges are accorded to European inhabitants by the Sublime Porte, which,

were they enjoyed properly, and not abused, would very much conduce to their comfort and dignity. Amongst these privileges the chief and best is, that of every European, whether consul, merchant, doctor, or tradesman, being permitted to protect a certain number of native Ryahs of the country, from the taxation and law-courts. No sooner is the name of a Ryah sent into the Consul by an European, and mentioned as being employed as his servant (for the understanding is that it is only menials to whom this boon may be accorded), than from that instant the servant is liberated from the yoke of the local government, and becomes, in every sense of the word, a British or French subject, as the case may be.

Dependent as Europeans are upon the natives of the place for the discharge of the every-day duties of a household, this privilege is a very great one, inasmuch as his servants, with very few exceptions, are sure to be honest and zealous in the discharge of their duties. They have a perpetual dread of giving the slightest

cause of offence, lest they should at once be deprived of the benefits they derive from the protective system. Indeed, this is the only motive that induces a people so naturally idle to undergo the fatiguing duties of domestic servitude, as all the inhabitants of Syria manage to, get a sufficiency, more or less, to supply their wants, and they wish for nothing further. Thus, Europeans would be entirely at their mercy, were it not for the fear of taxation and the recruiting system, while on the other hand, from possessing this protecting power, they are looked up to by the Turks, and the native Christians, as something superior to the ordinary race of men, and are respected and esteemed accordingly.

- But this system, as I have said, has its abuses. In many towns, and in Aleppo especially, the practise has crept in of protecting opulent merchants and tradesmen. All the Consuls-General, Consuls, and Vice-Consuls, the English, French, and Sardinian excepted, are unsalaried; and to keep up the dignity of

their posts, it is most needful that they should find lucrative occupation. Most of them are prosperous merchants, but there is one, the keeper of a miserable little stall, whose whole chattels might be purchased for a hundred pounds, and who is yet compelled to have his cocked-hat, uniform, and sword, and his silver headed stick, and all the other insignia of office, to support which it is very evident there must be something more than is visible to the eye. This source of emolument is the funds he derives by protecting some of the most opulent Christian inhabitants, who, thus protected, set at defiance the local authorities, strut about the streets with a magisterial air, and are continually being embroiled with the Turks and Arabs. Should these latter be provoked to strike them, as is often the case, then they are signally punished, and have no means of redress offered to them. In consequence of such practices, a deadly hatred to the Christians is sown in their hearts; every one of the same creed shares the feeling, and only waits for an opportunity of

avenging himself. At length it arrives :  
and then such a carnage ensues as has just  
taken place at Aleppo.

These are the abuses of the protective system,  
to suppress which every effort should be made  
by the proper authorities.

## CHAPTER VII.

Route to Scanderoon—A ruined city—The Sulphur Springs—Pass of Beilam—The Marshes—Invasion of jackalls—A night adventure—Scene at the landing-place—The mountaineers—The robber's nest—History of a Turkish bandit—An Eastern prison.

THERE are two ways of approaching Aleppo from Alexandretta, or Scanderoon, as it is sometimes called, and Iskanderoon by the Turks. That generally taken by caravans brings the traveller, at the close of the first day, to Terminine, a village inhabited by knavish Fellahs and overrun with cats, and which is about eight hour's ride from Aleppo.

The other road is preferable for tourists, for besides being less monotonous, it leads through the handsomely-built village of Dartagan, and over the mountain of Saint Simon (not Styletes), on the top of which are to be seen the ruins of an ancient temple, whilst on either side are the dilapidated remains of some extensive city. I traversed these ruins on two occasions, in the hope of obtaining some clue, by means of inscriptions or other relics, to the character of its ancient inhabitants, but without success. All I lighted on was a badly executed ship, drawn, or rather scratched, upon one of the smooth stones, with the letters J.T., 1737, cut under it; no doubt the handiwork of some shipmaster, who had passed here *en route* to Aleppo.

This road also leads to Hummumat, the celebrated sulphur springs, situated in the plains of Amuk, ten hours' ride from Aleppo. These springs were built over and kept in excellent condition by Ibrahim Pasha, but on the Egyptians evacuating Syria, the building was almost entirely pulled down by some Turkish

soldiers. The smell on entering the bath is at first very obnoxious, but it gradually wears off, and then the tepid waters are a luxury which compensates for every inconvenience.

Amuk is the name given to all that extensive plain which extends from the mountains of Latachia on one side, to the foot of the Beilam range on the other—a space of about twenty square miles of rich and excellent soil, only wanting the hand of the cultivator to make it yield abundantly. The Afreen, a small river, runs across this plain, and joins the Orontes, between the towns of Horns and Hamar. The second day, the traveller generally sleeps at the picturesque town and pass of Beilam, which I shall, further on, minutely describe. Three hours' easy riding from thence brings him, on the third day, to Alexandretta.

Alexandretta, the port of Aleppo, and through which the whole commerce of Northern Syria passes, is situated on a little neck of land, forming a small cape at the south-eastern extremity of the gulf of Scanderoon, and is



encircled for miles by pestilential, and in some parts impassable, marshes.

On approaching the port from Aleppo, my guide conducted me over the remains of an ancient Roman road infamously out of repair, a very considerable proportion of the Roman stones being here and there absent, and causing a hiatus, into which your jaded beast never fails to stumble; and yet the *habitués* of Alexandretta were wont to rejoice in this old *voie Romaine*, though part of it, at most seasons of the year, is fathomless mud. It brought us to a very rickety old bridge spanning a canal, filled from a small but restless spring, whose waters, which never cease trickling, finding no adequate outlet, have created those baneful marshes which surround the town, extending over nearly the whole plain. The canal was originally cut by Ibrahim Pasha, at the instigation of an intelligent Italian, who acted as consul for several European states, Mr. Martinelli, and it still retains his name.

During the Egyptian occupation, the canal

was maintained in proper repair, and a machine was procured from England for the purpose of keeping it clear of mud and weeds. But as the evacuation of Syria immediately followed, the machine was destroyed by the Egyptian soldiers, and the canal, which had already in great measure drained the marshes and proved a blessing to the wretched inhabitants, is now, through the obstinate and unpardonable neglect of the Turkish authorities, entirely choked up, and in a very short time not a vestige will remain to mark its site.

The European Consular authorities, as well as the merchants of Aleppo, have on several occasions made most strenuous efforts to induce the Turkish government to have these marshes drained, but the local authorities as usual sent some soi-disant engineers to form an estimate of what the cost would be, and these employés, the bane of Turkey as far as useful works are concerned, estimated what ought to be their gains, and the sum frightened the authorities, who, as they always do upon like occasions,

religiously concealed the estimate under the divan cushions, the place where such documents are invariably deposited in Turkey, and there the matter rested. The few Europeans, however, residing at Scanderoon, especially those to whom the matter was one of vital importance, got up a subscription amongst themselves in 1844, and actually commenced the good work of drainage, when the local officials discountenanced the project, threatening, the labourers with the bastinado which effectually put a stop to this laudable undertaking. The motive assigned for this strange procedure, was, that the Franks, when the work was completed, would probably lay claim to the recovered land. This was the Turkish dog in the manger, at the same time that they were perishing from fevers, and never dreamt of turning the marshes to any account themselves.

The first thing that strikes a stranger on arriving at Alexandretta is the complexion of the inhabitants, natives as well as Europeans. They have a strange unearthly yellow tinge,

with deep sunken eyes, and a shrivelled frame, facts which speak more than volumes for the pernicious effects of marsh miasma. Fever and ague have set their seal on every face, and with so indelible a mark that a Scanderoon is easily distinguished in any other city, and immediately pointed out. In fact, as an English ship-master once pithily remarked to me, they look more like "church yard deserters" than living beings.

The British Consulate's residence had been burnt by the Egyptian troops before evacuating Syria, and the Vice-Consul was consequently compelled, whilst it was under repair, to live in the hovel in which I found him. It was, however, about the best house then at Alexandretta. It had one upper room supported on two spars, which used to shake and tremble like reeds at every gust of wind. The miserable shutters went on slides, and when once they were shut, it was impossible to open them again, without the co-operation of all the servants, which indeed was also needed to shut them. Besides this, the wind used to whistle

through every board in the room, notwithstanding the many endeavours to remedy this evil by pasting old newspapers over the cracks, and by nailing a sail bought from a skipper in the roads, over every partition. This was our winter sitting-room, and here many a cold day we sat crouched over a large charcoal brazier, placed in the centre of the room, looking like warlocks at a cauldron. When it rained, leaks were as general as in a grotto, and we were sometimes obliged to take refuge in the bed-room, which, though damp, was more weather-proof, being built and terraced with stone. Such was the residence occupied by Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Alexandretta, for which there was no remedy but patience, and a fervent hope that the winter would not prove either a wet or long one.

Shortly after my arrival, the winter set in in earnest; the marshes outspread their bounds; the drains and mountain rivulets rose higher than their embankments, and the whole place was flooded. There was not a dry spot for the

sole of the foot to rest upon, save in the immediate vicinity of the sea-side ; and as the house which the Vice-Consul was building was on the beach, we were compelled each day to wade through mire and water to superintend the operations of the workmen, who would, without such overlooking, have made very little progress, preferring the pipe of repose to working under such adverse circumstances. Many a cold morning have I looked out of window, and watched the poor peasants who lived in the rush huts close around us. Men, women and children were often occupied for hours in baling the water out of their wretched tenements—water which had risen from underground, and flowed in from the sides ; for the roofs, though thatched with reeds, were generally sufficiently water-tight to keep the rain from dripping on the inmates while asleep. They slept on boards elevated from the ground, or they must have perished, and it was only this that enabled some of them to live at all. When we consider, in addition to this damp, that they all belong

to the Greek Church, and have a long and rigid fast to keep about this time of the year, which strictly prohibits the use of meat, fish, eggs, butter, milk, or any composition that contained these ingredients, and permits no other sustenance than oil, olives, dry fruit and rice, the only wonder is how they could exist at all. This fifty days Lent immediately precedes their Christmas, though during that period every individual is subject at intervals to returning fits of fever and ague, which never entirely leave those who have once been attacked by them.

I found wild ducks, geese, snipe, swans, and water-fowl of every description were plentiful at Scanderoon. We used to have an occasional shot from the windows of the house, and once or twice picked up a stray woodcock, but the heavy rain made it anything but inviting to follow up sporting to any extent. Ague, from which I had never then been a sufferer, hung in *terrorem* over my head; besides which, I never lacked game for eating,

during the whole of the winter, as the peasants in the surrounding villages plentifully supplied us with it daily. This was peculiarly fortunate, as no meat was procurable, owing to the fast, and the villanous jackals had, despite every precaution, so thinned the poultry-yard in their nocturnal visitations, that we were compelled to be chary of such of our stock as remained.

The more frightful the weather at night, the more it snowed, and hailed, and blew, and the more terrific the thunder and lightning, the more plentiful and mischievous were the jackals; indeed, they certainly prefer stormy weather for their exploits, mingling their dismal yells with the uproar of the elements. Now a detachment close under our windows would give a sudden yell to a more distant party, which would bear it on to a third, employed in a still more remote quarter, and then, for the space of five minutes, an incessant yelling would be kept up, mingled with the deep baying of the village dogs, which were as great thieves among



the poultry as the jackals themselves. After this, a deep silence would ensue, which indicated the approach of mischief, and soon a violent cackling and screeching gave notice that the Philistines were at work. One Christmas-Eve we rushed out to the rescue, and succeeded in recapturing five geese and an old turkey-cock, which these inveterate rogues had slung over their backs, and were quietly trotting off with. Though they had to scale a wall some four feet high, they used to manage to carry heavy burthens with them, and once over, the paddling of their feet in the marshes announced as orderly a retreat as the best dragoons could effect. When the moon enabled us to pick them out in this spot, they on some occasions lost the number of their mess, though I really believe that at times they were in detachments of no less than from eighty to a hundred strong. Jackals and dogs by night, and the interminable croaking of millions of frogs by day, are an astounding state of things to a new comer ; but

time and habit make these matters of course, and I soon began to regard them as little as a native.

The Europeans at Alexandretta, when I arrived there, were, besides my brother, the French Consul M. G—— and his amiable family; Mr. Giokino, the Austrian agent and the factor for the merchants of Aleppo, an Italian, Doctor Brambilla, and two or three others. The French Consul was by far the oldest resident, and had been there some forty years, and his wife, besides being the only lady in the place, was so amiable and motherly a person, that, during my stay, our great resort in the evening was their hospitable abode.

The whole male population of Alexandretta are occupied in landing, weighing, and rolling to the magazines and warehouses the cargoes of Manchester bales brought by the different vessels. It is impossible to imagine a scene more bustling and more discordant. Camel-drivers are clamorous to have their caravans loaded; muleteers to have theirs unloaded; custom-

officers and factors are continually involved in disputes ; masters of vessels just arrived are anxious to land, or to settle and depart ; cadaverous-looking Italian skippers, who have been three months " on the berth " for Leghorn, and have as yet about as many bales of wool on board, make frantic inquiries about their Syrian consignee's intentions, and being pacified with stout promises, return on board and catch fish for the crew till dinner-time. French masters, in fustian coats and mud boots, stroll along the beach to shoot sandpipers for breakfast, and I once detected one deliberately catching frogs with a hook and line. He stoutly affirmed that there was no more effectual way of clearing out a vessel of rats, than throwing some frogs into the hold. Every one has some kind of occupation in hand. Even the Italian doctor is in pursuit of knowledge under difficulties, and in a hovel that is knee-deep in mud and water, studies metaphysics on a platform island in the centre.

By some unfortunate mistake in the arrange-

ment of the territorial limits of the pashaliks, Alexandretta, instead of being included in that of Aleppo, of which it is the natural port, comes under the sway of the Pasha of Adana. This occasions considerable inconvenience to the consuls, merchants, and factors, as, in the event of any misunderstanding or grievance, redress is only obtainable by a representation being made to the authorities at Adana, and it is not likely, especially in Turkey, that these functionaries should evince a lively interest in the welfare of a port from which they derive no revenue, as the custom duties are paid at Aleppo, while they incur both expense and trouble. Aleppo, on the other hand, though considerably benefitted by its import and export trade, its custom dues, salt monopoly, and inland taxes upon beasts of burthen, is wholly exempted from any trouble with its local and internal government. Hence the Mutzelim, or Governor of Alexandretta, who resides at Beilam, the mountain pass through which the high road to Aleppo defiles, is regularly ap-

pointed by the Pasha of Adana, and great inconvenience and procrastination in despatch of business is the natural result.

The principal evil suffered by the merchants and factors arises from the depredations occasionally committed by a band of robbers infesting these parts, who waylay and strip caravans, and even manage to abstract goods by night from the warehouses, a thing by no means difficult, and it was a notorious fact, that the nucleus of this banditti was in the immediate vicinity of a town called Pyass or Byass, at the opposite corner of the gulf, amongst almost inaccessible mountain passes, only known to the inhabitants of the adjacent villages. It was even whispered that they received indirect countenance and support in their nefarious transactions from the Governor of Byass, who, though a subject and *employé* of the Sublime Porte, was immediately descended from a noted rebel chief, and inherited some small portion of his ancestor's disposition. It was found good policy by the Consuls to be

on a friendly footing with this said Governor, the renowned Mustuk Bey, and to keep, if possible, in his good books. Any little attention or civility flattered his vanity, and was productive of more real good to the interests of all parties concerned, than could be obtained by any reprimands or remonstrance from his nominal chief, the Pasha of Adana.

I went by sea to Byass with some friends, to make the personal acquaintance of the Bey. We took with us a week's provisions and our bedding material, as it was our intention to live on shore during our visit. A few hours' run brought us to the anchorage, and half an hour's walk from the landing-place to the house of a Greek, who was to be our host. The hut was a commodious one, and clean enough in its way, the walls being composed of myrtle cuttings, rendered air tight with mud. The thatching was of straw, and completely waterproof, excepting in parts near the sides of the walls, where some neighbour's cows had committed a felony, and eaten divers holes in the

roof. The village, built on the site of a once substantial city, of which considerable traces remain, had a pretty appearance, the houses being detached, and surrounded by small mulberry gardens. There was a large hole in the centre of our hut, which served for a fire-place, and in which blazed a roaring wood fire, that effectually excluded the damp and cold.

The hostess, a pretty little woman, with her matronly-looking mother, were busily engaged, when we entered, about our evening repast, whilst an old man, who might have been born with Methusalah, sat opposite to us in the middle of the smoke, at which he would wink and blink in a most remarkable manner, relieving himself occasionally with a stare and a grin of recognition at us. He was troubled with an unmistakable church-yard cough, for which he wanted us to prescribe, and which, according to his own showing, had been hanging about him ever since Buonaparte invaded Syria. When we expressed our regret at being unable to afford him any medical relief, he crept

mysteriously towards an old chest, in a dark corner of the hut, and, having extracted therefrom a bottle that would hold about a gallon and a half, took a long, steady draught, and then carefully put it up again. This bottle contained aqua vitæ or arrack, and the old man was in a perpetual state of alarm, lest any one should get at it. The most extraordinary thing about him was, that he still retained an acute sense of hearing, and was keenly alive to music of any description. This we discovered by mere chance; for one of us happening to whistle a few bars of some lively air, the old fellow was off the ground in an instant, screwed up his mouth in ineffectual attempts to whistle, kept time with his head and hands, and eventually set off capering, and danced round and round the fire in such grotesque and unearthly attitudes, as convulsed us all with laughter. I firmly believe that, whilst under the influence of this musical mesmerism, he was totally unconscious of what he was doing,



and would have danced till he had dropped if any one could have whistled long enough. But, luckily for him, it was a moral impossibility to look at him without laughing, which brought the tune to an end. Having seated himself on a rug close to the fire, he coughed and smoked through the rest of the night, occasionally waking us up by his alarming hoots and cries, intended to frighten away the cows, which were pulling unmercifully at the thatched roof. It rained in torrents all night, which, however, did not prevent our repose. Next morning the weather was fine again, and the sun shone forth gloriously.

We determined, after breakfast, to pay our visit to Mustuk Bey, and then pass the day in exploring the ruined fortress and bazaars. It may easily be conceived with what a mixed feeling of curiosity we approached the residence of this mountain chief, linked as his name was with the dread fame of his ancestor, Kutchuk Ali Oglu; for, although there is now-a-days

little to fear on the part of Europeans from Turkish treachery, his bad repute did not inspire much confidence.

Kutchuk Ali Oglu, the grandfather of Mustuk Bey, flourished towards the close of the last, and the beginning of the present century. Of his early life or parentage I have been able to gather but little information, further than that he was, I believe, of rather low origin, and was only indebted to his own craft and innate abilities for the position which he worked out for himself, and the sway which he maintained over this district for upwards of forty years. Intimately allied to, and in daily intercourse with the chiefs and ringleaders of the bandit tribes who inhabited the mountains in the immediate vicinity of Byass, he had ample opportunity afforded him of visiting those inaccessible strongholds, and of calculating to what purpose they might be turned in case of necessity. Viewed in conjunction with the natural defences afforded by almost impenetrable forests, Byass, he saw, could be rendered

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impregnable to the assaults and threats of not only the surrounding pashas, but even of the whole power of the Sublime Porte. And acting upon the impulse of such an idea, urged on by his ambition and thirst for power, he gradually managed to so far ingratiate himself in the good opinion of the mountaineers, portraying to their wild imaginations the results which must inevitably ensue from following up his plans, and adopting him as their sole leader, that they flocked in masses to his standard, and unanimously elected him their chief.

The first measure adopted by Kutshuk Ali Oglu, on obtaining this long-wished for pre-eminence, was the immediate construction of a storehouse and granaries in the caves and ravines of the most lofty, and apparently inaccessible, summits of this mountain range; and the approach to some of these spots was so intricate, so winding, and so perilous, as to admit of but one individual advancing at a time, whilst those stationed above commanded, from their lofty position, a bird's eye view of

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the whole ascent, and could, if required, shoot all who approached, or by rolling down massive stones, even crush them to dust. On many of the most elevated of these points, Kutchuk Ali Oglu caused sham fortresses to be constructed with clay, and though materially damaged by every heavy shower, yet being kept in constant repair, they had at a distance an imposing appearance. Having laid by provisions, and prepared an asylum to which, in case of being hard pressed or pursued by his enemies, he could retreat, Kutchuk Ali Oglu openly unfurled the banner of revolt, and set at defiance the pashas and governors of the surrounding provinces, commencing a series of forays, which, from small beginnings, increased daily till they reached to such a glaring extent, that his name became a word of terror from Aleppo to Konia. Yet the followers of this man are supposed to have never exceeded five hundred, though this fact only came to light after his death, when his bands were dispersed. Whenever a strange traveller passed

through his domains, he arranged his adherents after the fashion of soldiers in a play ; and the same set, favoured by the impenetrable thickness of the forests, would pass and repass upwards of a dozen times before he reached the village. The next day, on his quitting the locality, the same farce would be repeated, till he was fairly without the confines of the mountains, so that the report spread by this man, on reaching Scanderoon, was, that whilst traversing Kutchuk Ali's domains, he had seen thousands of soldiers, and that his territory literally swarmed with armed men. As every successive traveller confirmed this report, no doubt of its truth existed, and the robber chief was universally dreaded.

Vain, though oft repeated, were the efforts of the pashas of Adana and Aleppo to force this rebel to capitulate. Thousands of men were sent against him, while ships of war bombarded his fortresses, but from his stronghold he laughed them to scorn, and so harrassed them by sorties and skirmishing parties, intercepting

their provisions, turning off the springs that supplied the town with water, and a hundred other annoyances, that the troops, after burning the miserable huts which composed the village of Byass, would gladly retreat from his territories, and make the best excuse they could for their want of success. Finally, his depredations and excesses became so serious, that the whole of the military force then at Konia—a very considerable one, and commanded by experienced generals—was ordered to lay siege to the place, and capture him dead or alive. Just before the arrival of this armament, the whole cargo of a richly-laden French ship had, by a strange accident, fallen into his clutches, and contained, amongst other valuables, several rich cases of jewellery and gold watches. These were just what he wanted at this crisis, and he carefully hoarded them as a store of presents, to be bestowed as occasion should dictate. One part of his policy had always been to allow his followers no idle time, being sensible that idleness promotes discontent, and that dis-

content would work his downfall. He, therefore, at the same time that he supplied them liberally with food, liquor, money, and even luxuries, would insist on their being continually occupied, and, when not engaged in their predatory excursions, would reconstruct the ruined houses of the village, till the ground, and raise embankments, having for each work some plausible reason, and inciting others to their duty by his example, labouring himself with a spade amongst them. On such occasions they were kept at work till nigh upon midnight, when each man would wrap himself up in his mislah or cloak, and sleep in a circle round a blazing fire till dawn. Their eccentric chief reposed in a sitting posture, with his gun between his knees and ready cocked. Thus he would take potations of ardent spirit and spells of sleep alternately till morning, when labour was resumed. It was a saying of Kutchuk Ali Oglu, that he considered the two most delightful enjoyments of life to be the sensation caused by the tremor attendant on an ague fit, and

that of imbibing a long draught of cold spring water, the first thing on awaking in the morning, after a deep carousal : there is certainly no accounting for taste.

The impending attack of the Sultan's forces kept the rebel's brains continually at work. He determined upon receiving them with bribes and flattery, instead of resorting to his usual method of bush fighting and making sorties. For the better execution of this plan, the whole surrounding villages were laid under contribution for the supply of sheep, oxen, goats, fowls, oil, olives, and other necessities, and herds of cattle were driven from the pasturage of their luckless owners into the territories of the rebel chief, who had hardly completed these arrangements before the Sultan's forces were at hand. He immediately collected his adherents, and with them and their families, found shelter in his inaccessible fastnesses, where well-filled granaries and storehouses insured them ample supplies, and a village of well-built huts afforded



lodging. Nothing, indeed, was wanting for comfort and security.

At midnight the Turkish force encompassed Byass, cutting off, as they imagined, all communication with the mountain and other villages, and, at a given signal, the attack commenced. The houses were set on fire, and the flame soon spread to the surrounding brushwood, and even caught the forest. The loud crash of falling timber, the affrighted cry of the night owl, and the perpetual yells of jackals and beasts of prey, who fled from the fire only to meet death in some other shape, resounded far and near through the mountains. Morning broke on this scene of desolation, and the troops and their commander found, to their rage and disappointment, that whilst they had fondly hoped and imagined that they were reducing to cinders the fortresses, magazines, armouries, and granaries of the banditti, they had been wasting their energies on a miserable uninhabited village, and that the bird they

had hoped to ensnare was safely out of their clutches, making merry at their expense.

Affairs remained in this state for several weeks. No communication had been held with the rebel, and the Turkish General's only hope of forcing him to capitulate lay in his keeping a rigid guard on the mountains on every side, and so eventually starving him from his den. It would have been a fruitless task to attempt to attack him where he then was, even had the Turks been acquainted with the circuitous pathways of the ascent. Expresses, therefore, were dispatched to Constantinople, demanding a further supply of provisions for the troops, and men were employed in the erection of suitable habitations for the Pashas, their suites, and the soldiers.

In this interval, commerce with Asia Minor, which had been suspended on account of the high road to Aleppo passing directly through Byass, began to revive again. Caravans to and from Aleppo and Constantinople passed almost weekly, and appearances promised a speedy

termination to an evil too long endured and submitted to. Kutchuk Ali Oglu thought otherwise, and, as events proved, judged rightly. An incessant fall of rain at Byass and in its vicinity put an effectual stop to all building operations; and fever, in a malignant form, broke out amongst the Sultan's troops. The men lost heart, sickened and died; provisions failed rapidly, and their sufferings were each day increasing. The General, at last, fell ill himself, and then Kutchuk Ali, who had been watching for an occasion, sent down a deputation to express his regret at the Pasha's state of health, and to offer for his acceptance, and the relief of his followers, live stock, grain, oil, dried fruits, &c., which he engaged daily to renew so long as his Excellency saw fit to honour his territory with his presence. The Pasha was astounded at the man's generosity, as were all the Turkish soldiery, and when, in addition to these, daily peace offerings, the gold watches and trinkets came into play, the game was won. The commanders proposed

not only to withdraw their troops and retire to Constantinople, but to make such a report of the noble conduct of Kutchuk Ali Oglu, who had by acts proved himself to be a faithful subject and ally of the Sultan, instead of the rebel he had been peculiarly represented, as should inevitably bring him into the Sultan's favour. Before their departure, Kutchuk signed a treaty, stipulating to afford especial protection to the caravan of holy pilgrims that must unavoidably pass through his territory on their annual route to Mecca, and to befriend and protect commerce and travellers. This was approved of by the Sublime Porte, and he was officially created Governor of the district, which elevated him to the high grade of Pasha of two tails.

Now Kutchuk had obtained his day-dream of life; and soon of renown. Byass became a veritable town, inhabited by some ten thousand souls. The spacious bazaars were covered in with domes, as is the custom in all large oriental towns. A fortress of some magnitude and great strength was constructed, and in the

centre of this building rose the prison—a place full of mysterious dark chambers, and containing instruments and contrivances for torture, at which humanity shudders. Next to the prison was the house of prayer, where the call to worship from the lofty minaret was oft-times the knell of some hapless victim in the prison.

It was the practise of Kuchuk Ali Oglu, on the approach of the Mecca pilgrimage, to impale two prisoners, however trifling their crime, one on either side of the gateway which led through the town ; and this spectacle was always renewed on the approach of any rich caravans, in order to strike terror into their already intimidated souls. On one occasion, it so happened that the prisons were all empty with the exception of one cell, in which was a Christian, who for a small debt had been incarcerated, and was then ill of a fever and ague. Kutchuk Ali knew not what to do in this dilemma, till, at length, he determined on impaling the poor Greek debtor, alleging as an excuse that the man was always suffering from ill-health, and

it was best to put him out of his misery at once. The man was accordingly impaled upon the high road, and presented a frightful spectacle to the approaching caravan.

It was usual on the arrival of a party of pilgrims, and before they durst enter the town, to send a horse richly caparisoned, and other costly offerings for Kutchuk Ali's acceptance, and these he usually returned again, until something was forthcoming that he deemed worthy of acceptance, and then the caravan passed rapidly on, and never halted till arriving at Alexandretta. Such scenes of cruelty and injustice as he daily practised, added to the victims who starved in prison, or died worse deaths, could not but tend to diminish the population rapidly, till a general desertion took place, and the town was left to rot and crumble, in company with the bones of its inhuman founder, who, it is supposed, died from the effects of a too violent debauch, full of years and iniquities, hated and abhorred even to this day. His son succeeded to the post of Governor, where,

however, he remained not many years, having incurred the displeasure of the Pasha of Adana, who, under the mask of friendship, invited him to his palace, and there had him instantly beheaded. Mustuk Bey, the present Governor, was then a child, and took refuge with his mother amongst the mountaineers, till his years, and the death of his father's enemy, the Pasha of Adana, enabled him to lay claim to his paternal property. He now resides at Byass, in a handsome residence, and is likely to remain there during his lifetime. Byass has again become a tolerably thriving village, inhabited almost entirely by Christians. Its staple is sessame-seed, silk, and cotton, which are annually exported to Europe.

Soon after Kutchuk Ali had been elevated to the dignity of Pasha, an English vessel, bound for Alexandretta, had unfortunately mistaken the port, and anchored off Byass. The master had no sooner landed, than he and his boat's crew were pinioned and imprisoned. The vessel was then duly taken possession of, and

the whole of her cargo landed. The master and crew were then set at liberty in the fortress, where permission was granted them to take exercise on the ramparts, and the unfortunate captain, in a fit of despair, threw himself into the dry ditch beneath, and was literally dashed to pieces. The remainder of the crew died off, one by one, from the effects of fevers and bad diet, till only one poor lad remained, and Kutchuk Ali, finding that no ransom was forthcoming, after practising every cruelty towards the unfortunate sufferer, finally sent him as a present to the English Consul at Alexandretta. Some time before, a French brig had met with a like fate, with this exception, that the crew and captain were immediately liberated, and allowed to proceed by land to Alexandretta, owing, I presume, to the satisfaction the wretch had derived from gloating over the treasures contained in her cargo, amongst which were jewels and watches, part of which were used to corrupt his Turkish assailants.



Mr. Massok, the Dutch consul at Aleppo, was on particularly good terms with the rebel chief, having often had transactions with him connected with commercial matters. This gentleman wrote him a letter on the occasion of the seizure of the French brig, recommending restitution to be made without loss of time. Kutchuk's reply was most characteristic:—"You know," said he, "my ever dear friend, that the love I bear you would make me incur any sacrifice for your pleasure, even were it the life of my only son Baba. But place yourself, I implore you, in my position, and then ask yourself the question, whether you would have acted otherwise than I have done. I am without money or friends. The wants of my faithful followers must be supplied, and to add to my embarrassment, I am threatened by enemies from the four quarters of the globe. In this dilemma, an ever-watchful Providence sends me a ship richly laden with all things, and thus we are saved from utter perdition. I am unwilling, however, that any should suffer

by cause of me ; if, therefore, the owners of this cargo will condescend to honour me with a visit, they can pick and choose from my domains, gardens and grounds five times the value of what they have lost."

It will be readily conceived that few were found willing to avail themselves of this liberal offer. Poor Mr. Massok himself eventually fell into the rebel's clutches, who, after forcibly detaining him, under prettexts of friendship, and a wish to feast him on the fat of the land, at length requested some exorbitant loan of money, which, being refused, the unfortunate Consul was thrown into prison, and maltreated, till he was eventually sold as a slave to some pilgrims, from whom Kutchuk enforced the immediate payment of the sum he had originally demanded of Mr. Massok.

We found Mustuk Bey a man of very prepossessing manners and appearance, with a noble bearing, and the eye of a hawk. He soon effaced all unpleasant feelings or prejudices, and after an hour's interesting conversation, we left him very

much impressed in his favour, and I believe taking all in all, he is about as good a Governor as Turkey can boast, and peculiarly fitted for the management of the mountaineers, who, though now seldom guilty of any outrage, would become very troublesome, if not ruled with an iron rod. We found the castle in pretty good repair, and the dungeons and cells made one's blood curdle. Damp, unearthly smells came up from them, and the wind moaning mournfully through crumbling apertures, sounded like the moans of their ancient inmates. The mosque was a magnificent ruin, full of exquisitely chiseled marble pillars, and with a perfect mosaic flooring. We climbed up the tottering minaret, and from its ruined summit, had a fine view of the surrounding scenery. Thence we passed through the lofty and desolate-looking bazaars, which must once have given occupation to hundreds of souls.

A solitary old man sold coffee and tobacco in a miserable corner, and with this exception, not a soul did we meet amongst the ruins of

the town, or till we got back to the modern village, which is evidently a flourishing one ; and the air of contentment and cheerfulness in men, women and children, who were all merry-making, as it was the eve of some festival, spoke much in favour of the present government, and strangely contrasted with the past history of the far-famed mountain.

There is an old isolated ruined castle on the top of a hill behind Byass, into which no native would on any occasion enter alone, as it is supposed to be haunted by the evil spirit of the rebel chief.

## CHAPTER VIII.

The Levant Company — Dreadful mortality — Novel mode of bird-catching — An Asiatic nuisance — A Turkish aqueduct—The Pirate's treasure—Irruption of rats—The camel-drivers—The Sultan's mother—Life of a native female—Nicosia.

I WAS for a considerable time resident at Alexandretta, and when the fever from which I was suffering permitted, I rambled over the place in search of what it was grievously deficient in, amusement.

The old Levant Company's factory, built more than a century ago, and where more Englishmen died during the continuance of their charter, then have died in all Syria since its

expiration, was the first place to attract my attention. Even the walls, which remain at the present day, show it to have been a strong and capacious building. There is one entrance facing the sea. It now stands exactly in the centre of an inaccessible marsh, with only a thread of rising ground from the gateway to the beach. Well indeed might the factors have been short-lived in those days. However comfortable and well furnished, or however lofty and dry their apartments, however abundant the necessities and luxuries of life, (and they are said to have been rare *bon-vivants*), every breath they inhaled was charged with poisonous miasma, and vapours noxious with putrified vegetable and animal matter. Hence arose the circumstance of the archives of the Aleppo Consulate containing so many melancholy records of the untimely fates of these unhappy men. Here, one reads of the appointment of Mr. Smith to be factor at Alexandretta, and a dozen pages afterwards there is an entry of his sudden illness and death: so his successor,

and so on for several successive years, four months being reckoned a long period for a factor to survive. One poor man managed to get through two years, when he got leave to visit Aleppo for the benefit of his health, and a week after his return, he was buried in the Greek Church.

There was now little to be seen of this structure but the outer walls and some bomb-proof cellars, out of which fig-trees and pomegranates were vigorously sprouting. On scrambling up to the upper rooms, where I had the gratification of meeting a snake, I found the place so shaky and unsafe, that I was glad to get down again with whole limbs.

The Greek Church is a curious old structure, full of quaint-looking pictures, intended as representatives of saints, and containing some very antique carvings. The grave-yard is close by, and the whole is enclosed by lofty walls, to keep out the jackals. Many a poor Englishman lies buried here, and some elaborately carved and handsome marble monuments still

remain to indicate their graves. One bears date so far back as 1650 ; but the finest are those raised to the memory of Sir Thomas Pye, who died here on his return from Jerusalem, and a family of the name of Lowe—Martin Lowe, his wife, daughter, and son-in-law. In the neighbourhood is an old Crusaders' camp, so strongly built and cemented together, as to have resisted every effort made to pull it down, for the purpose of using the stone in the construction of other edifices.

I had some good shooting here. The frankolin, a remarkably fine bird, and something between a pheasant and a partridge, is peculiar to this part of the country, and could be met with in flights. I consider it to be the most delicate game in existence. The natives, who never attempt to shoot anything on the wing, have a method of getting pot shots at these birds. They carry a frame-work, covered with canvass, containing two eyelet holes and a little opening for the gun to pass through, and thus accoutered they stealthily approach the haunts



of the frankolin, which mistakes the canvass for the wings of some huge bird of prey, and retreats precipitately into a bush, whence it reconnoitres its movements, while the natives, having fixed the frame-work on the bush, leisurely take aim at it.

The boys at Scanderoon practice a similar manœuvre to entrap quails, except that, instead of guns, they have hand-nets, and go in parties of from ten to fifteen. They beat the bushes in a large circle, and gradually approach a central point, flapping the canvass all the time, which so terrifies the birds, that they all keep flying inward, till they are collected in one bush. Then the hand-nets of the boys secure them, and as many as forty brace are taken at a throw. Immense numbers of migratory birds are also taken at this season by means of bird-lime. Goldfinches are the earliest arrivals, and it is not unusual to see a cluster of more than twenty beautifully-variegated birds strung to a pack-thread, offered by these urchins to ship-masters for three piastres, about six pence.

About June the great heats set in, and it is wonderful to see the sudden change wrought on the face of nature. All vegetation is parched up in a week ; the whole earth assumes a fiery red tinge ; and the refraction from the sky and sea, aided by the sandy beach, occasions a glare that is insufferable. But though the heat by day is intense, excepting when a stray breeze from seaward chances to reach it, it is not to be compared with the stifling, suffocating, and uninterrupted closeness of the atmosphere at night. The lofty mountains in the immediate vicinity of the village have no opening to admit the circulation of air. The sea breezes seem stopped in their progress, and heavy masses of vapourish clouds, which have been hitherto driven before them, now effectually impede the land breeze in the rear. Hence not a leaf is heard to stir, and not even a frog croaks from the marshes ; which at this season are enveloped in mist, only dispelled for a few hours before and after mid-day. To add to the

disagreeables which beset us, some petty merchants of Aleppo were induced one year to speculate in bones, which were collected at Alexandretta, and heaped up ready for shipment by the first vessel found willing to take so loathsome a cargo. A portion of these bones were accumulated near the beach, but by far the greater mass were in a kind of court-yard connected with the factory, immediately under the windows of the counting-house, and close to the bed-chambers and sitting-room of the factors. Amongst these bones were several that had large pieces of flesh attached to them, and there were heads of animals in their entire state, which had been collected through the negligence of those appointed to superintend the purchase, and thrown into this heap. This nuisance, in conjunction with the naturally noxious atmosphere, rendered the vicinity of the factory a nucleus of pestilence. The French Consul and his family took flight to a village in the mountains, and even the poorest porter,

though himself compelled to remain and work, managed to send his family away for the summer.

Everything was burnt up and unwholesome : we were even obliged to fetch our water from the spring fountain-head, and keep it in earthen jars, in order to have it drinkable. The water supplied by the fountains in the village, owing to the pipes that brought it from the spring being damaged and out of repair, was more than lukewarm, and no one would drink it ; and yet not six months had passed since the good and philanthropic old man at whose expense the water had been conducted into the village, and who had laid out forty thousand piastres, or four hundred pounds, in the undertaking, had the satisfaction of seeing his good work completed, and died contented in the thought.

This was an act worthy of record. Musi Fani, the donor of the aqueduct, had been nearly half a century interpreter to the English at Scanderoon. He had no family, and having accumulated what was considered for

a native a considerable fortune, and his wife being well provided for, he thought of benefiting those around in a way in which all would be equal partakers of his generosity. Many a weary trudge would it save the poor peasant girls and women, through the hot sun of summer, and the cold and wet of the winter. Well for his peace was it, that he did not live to see the fraud which had been practised on him, by those to whom he had confided the execution of the works. The worst materials had been used, and on the approach of bad weather, the aqueduct gave way. There is a strong suspicion that his wife was implicated in the imposition ; and, certainly, her character is the reverse of his, as she is both sordid and crafty, and very unpopular with all her neighbours.

A strange oasis in the prospect was formed by the red and white oleander-bushes, which in summer are in full blossom, and surrounded by luxuriant myrtle-bushes, so thickly set as to be in some parts impenetrable. Innumerable hares find refuge in these thickets, and steal

forth to sip the dew at early dawn. The oleander flourishes along the sea-side, and springs out of the sandy beach in spots one would imagine to be the last in the world for such beautiful and delicate plants. There is also a species of white lily in blossom about the same period, and the *sylla maritima* (squill) springs up in every direction.

Vessels in summer should anchor far out at sea, so as to be benefitted by the sea and land breezes, which blow uninterruptedly in a line from Cape Kangyr to Jonas' Pillars, though impeded by headlands and capes from reaching Alexandretta. The operation of landing goods and ballasting will be retarded by the distance; but as the vessel must await the return messenger from Aleppo, the benefit accruing to the crew is of incalculably greater importance. Another precaution necessary, is to avoid exposure to the great heat of the day and the heavy dews of night. As the crew are employed in the boats, it is as well that they should knock off work from 10 A.M. till 2 P.M., and they should

always sleep under cover. Notwithstanding these precautions, fever breaks out on board. When this is the case, aperients should immediately be administered, followed by from sixteen to twenty grains of sulphate of quinine to be given the day after, in doses of four grains, taken half-hourly. Alexandretta has, however, a resident doctor, who, from practical knowledge and experience, putting aside his skill, knows well how to treat the ague. Spirit and wines should be avoided, or used in the utmost moderation, and bleeding should never be resorted to, as it has always proved fatal in Scanderoon.

Jonas' Pillars, so called from a tradition that exists among nautical men, that it was here the prophet Jonah was landed by the whale, are distinctly visible from the shipping. A close inspection shows plainly that they originally supported some triumphal arch, raised, perhaps, by Alexander after his victory over Darius; or what is more probable, they formed a gate of entrance to an old ruined castle, perfectly con-

cealed by brushwood and wild vines, and situated some two hundred yards beyond. A well-beaten pathway may still be traced to the ruin, and there are fragments of foundations of walls, which confirm one in this opinion. The high-road to Byass passes just above these pillars, and the remains of an old Roman road are in a perfect state of preservation.

Ship-masters generally make a point of visiting the Pillars by sea, pulling or sailing to them in their long-boats. The distance, however, is very deceptive, and twice as great as it appears. Persons visiting this spot will do well to go armed. The captain of a Sardinian brig, having found a rill of peculiarly fine water in this spot, whilst his vessel was loading a little lower down, determined on filling his water-casks here ; and accordingly he landed with the boat, and having filled as many casks as it contained, sent it off, with orders to the mate to return with a fresh batch of empty barrels ; meanwhile, he sauntered alone about the Pillars, and got entangled amongst the brushwood,



when he saw a native coming, as he supposed, to his assistance; but the fellow, instead of setting him in the right pathway, made him understand by signs that he should like to possess himself of all the loose money then in his pockets. To this the captain was naturally inclined to dissent, making no doubt that he could master his opponent with little difficulty. His dismay was great, however, when, on the other pointing to a little eminence just above his head, he discovered, for the first time, the grizzled faces of six or seven Arabs, with their guns levelled, ready to take aim at him. The money was immediately forthcoming, and no sooner had the boat touched the shore again, than he leapt into her, and ordered the men to pull for their lives, thankful to have escaped with the loss of only a handful of piastres. This happened in January, 1844.

The autumn of 1843, and the winter of that year and the next, were extremely mild and invigorating. Through the winter we had occasional attacks of the ague, from which we

were never afterwards entirely free; but with the help of that sovereign remedy, sulphate of quinine, we kept pretty clear of it for a season, sometimes enjoying three weeks of uninterrupted health. We got so accustomed to the evil at last; that when we were attacked, we scarcely heeded it. We ate and drank immediately before the fit, and were ravenous when it was past; and the strength we lost in one bout, was fully made up by good living before another turn came. We had one consolation, though it may be considered an equivocal one: we had run the gauntlet; fever had fairly settled in our constitutions, and assumed the form of an ague. Hence we were never liable to any fever of a malignant kind, and stood as good a chance as the oldest inhabitant of keeping up for years. Our doctor himself was as great a sufferer as any of us, but he soon threw all other medicines to the dogs, and followed our example of living well, and tempering himself with quinine.

There is a tradition amongst the natives of

Alexandretta, which I believe to have some foundation, that about seventy or eighty years ago, a notorious pirate was chased into the bay by a British cruizer, and so hard pressed, that the crew had only time to run the vessel ashore, and escape in their boats, with the money and valuables that they could most easily carry away, before she was boarded by the cruizer's boats, and her cargo being transhipped, she was set in flames. By escaping to the mountains, where all pursuit was fruitless, the pirates this time escaped the penalty of their lawless career; but in after years just retribution overtook some of them, and they were captured and taken into Malta, where they were hanged at the yard-arm of a frigate.

One of the pirates just before being executed, imparted to a compatriot Greek, a sailor of a vessel that was anchored hard by, the important secret that, at a certain distance from the shore, at Alexandretta, at a certain side of the bay, and under a spot marked by three palm-trees growing out of one stem,

there lay interred, at a considerable depth, a box containing no less a sum than seventy thousand Spanish dollars, which the pirates in their precipitate retreat had concealed, hoping at some future period to recover it. Their hopes, however, had been blighted by the impossibility of carrying away so heavy a box, without being detected by the wary coast guard. The consequence was, that the treasure was still there, and the dying culprit expressed a hope that his compatriot might some day be benefitted by the disclosure he had just heard. The pirates were hanged ; and years rolled by, ere the happy possessor of the secret found means of proceeding to Alexandretta. On his arrival, he was sadly perplexed by the fact of there being several palm-trees answering to the description given him, and almost all situated at a like distance from the shore. He resorted, however, to the plan of measuring the distance of each tree, pace by pace, and so hoped to arrive at some accurate conclusion as to the right spot he wished to discover. A grave


old Turk, who was accustomed three times a day to pray there, simply from the circumstance of its being close to a stream of water, which flowed into the sea, and enabled him with greater convenience to perform his ablutions, was struck with the strange manœuvrings of the dollar hunter; and finally arriving at the conclusion that he must be some wretched lunatic who had broken loose from his keeper, humanely determined on having him taken up, and bastinadoed, to discover the truth. He accordingly suggested this mild course to the Governor of Alexandretta, and that functionary having had ocular demonstration of the veracity of the Turk's statement as to the facts, ordered the Greek to be seized; and on his being unable to give any satisfactory account of himself, immediately subjected him to the prescribed punishment. Unable to withstand the torture, the writhing Greek spluttered out his secret, amidst groans and cries; and no sooner had his errand become known, than it got publicity all over the village, and from the village was

spread into the interior, by camel-drivers and muleteers, and along the sea coast as far as Stamboul, by the gossip-loving crews of native crafts.

The Greek was released, and sent back to his country; and that very night, all the palm-trees in the direction indicated were cut down to a level with the ground, and their roots burnt out, so that next day not a vestige of them was to be seen amongst the tall rushes and grass of the marshes. The Governor himself, in all probability, made secret efforts to recover the treasure; but whether he succeeded or not, it is impossible to say. One thing is certain, that for months afterwards no native was permitted to loiter near the spot, which would seem to indicate that the Governor's search had been fruitless; and indeed I have no doubt that, if the dollars were really ever buried there, they remain there to this day. Up to the present time indeed, at intervals of every three or four years, strangers arrive at Alexandretta, for the purpose of digging up the money,

bringing with them all the necessary implements, and an immense stock of ardour and perseverance. But they invariably go away with sorrowful looks, and fever-shaken frames, thoroughly convinced that the whole thing is a fable. Anybody, however, is at liberty to renew the quest, and probably adventurers will not be wanting for many a long year.

It was spring when we took possession of the new Consular residence at Alexandretta, and at the same time a large colony of rats moved in with us. There seemed, however, to be a tacit understanding between us, that we were to be masters by day and they by night. The large platform ceiling, between the tiled roof and the walls, was their hall of assembly till nightfall, and when the lights were out, and we in bed, they had access to every apartment. They made pretty free use of their liberty too, a silk neckcloth or a stray stocking, or the wick of a half-extinguished oil lamp, supplied them with a good meal; but their favourite *morceau*, if one might judge from the



crumpling and rumpling and confidential squeakings, was an old newspaper, which would always be devoured with avidity.

Poison had no effect on these unwelcome visitors. Drams of arsenic, sponges steeped in acids, and fried slices of cork, designed to swell enormously in their stomachs, with extra fine pulverized glass masked in sugar, and other destructive delicacies, were nocturnally placed for their consumption, and as regularly consumed, but seemed to have the effect of increasing, rather than diminishing, their numbers, and cats or traps they made merry withal.

It is a singular fact, that these rats invariably deserted the house in the summer months. Where they went to, I have no idea, but during the unhealthy season, not one was to be seen. I have read somewhere that there is a swampy plain at the foot of the Himalaya mountains, the atmosphere of which is so deadly during the hot months, that the very tigers and wild beasts, with which it is infested in the winter, retire to the mountains for purer air. Perhaps,



the same influences operate on the rats at Scanderoon; for if other animals shrink instinctively from fever, a rat may have the same fine perception and innate dread of ague.

The average time camels take to go from Alexandretta to Aleppo, is six days; but in winter they have sometimes, owing to the state of the roads, been twenty days on the journey. Muleteers perform it three days in summer, and six in winter. Messengers sent express on horseback accomplish it in two days or twenty-four hours; and what may appear strange, foot messengers, who are generally Arabs, get over the ground quite as quickly.

The camel-drivers are a hardy, robust race, who have seldom, throughout their lives, any other canopy over their heads, night or day, snow or rain, than the heavens. Enveloped in their sheep-skin cloaks, and squatted round such fire as the weather will permit of their having, they vociferate rather than talk, and sing and smoke, and are as contented as though

they were snugly seated in some baronial hall. They sleep an hour or so profoundly, and wake up as refreshed as though their couch had been eider-down, instead of the damp earth, and as though they had had the finest blankets, instead of frost, for their coverlet.

On the whole, nothing can exceed the hard life which these poor fellows lead. Buffeted and reviled by Turkish officials, or European merchants, they toil on the road, screaming to each other, or to their submissive but occasionally truant camels. Now a bale is hanging over a precipice and must be adjusted; and the cameliers hurry to each other with frantic clamour, their gaunt but muscular limbs quivering with excitement. "C'est un peuple criard," says Lamartine; and so in good truth they are. It is by no means an uncommon thing for them to lose their voices for a while, after an unusually disastrous accident to a camel, so perseveringly and incessantly had they bawled their injunctions, reproaches, and imprecations after the poor beast, ere it completed the mischief.

The loading of the camel is a most important matter. Two bales must be found of equal weight ; these are not always to be secured, and the struggle that ensues among the cameliers for such a couple defies description. Screams, oaths, and imprecations ring the air ; occasionally followed by an assault and battery, though they rarely come to blows. The Turkish officials, to restore order, unsparingly use their canes, while sundry kicks from the Frank factor second his interference. The last camel is loaded at length ; the caravan stalks stealthily away at a solemn and funereal pace. The ground they had occupied is immediately inspected by the vulture and the jackal, who pick up whatever has been left behind.

I have seen, at times, as many as one thousand camels leave Alexandretta for Aleppo in one day, bearing high aloft upon their backs two thousand Manchester iron-bound bales of twist and manufactures, a proud sight for the Englishman to meet, as he journeys from Aleppo

to the coast, on the plains of the Amuk. . Two classes of camels arrive : the summer, or Syrian camel; and the winter, or Turkoman camel. The latter is a much finer animal, and will carry, equally poised, two bales weighing together half a ton.

In 1842, the Sultan's aunt was one of the holy pilgrims who passed through Alexandretta to Mecca, and was escorted in great pomp. The British Consul, and some of the other Consuls, went towards Byass, to accompany the *cortège*. I joined the party, which was posted in a convenient position on the road by the Turkish officers, who joined the cavalcade. As the Sultana passed, we raised our hats to the gorgeous tartarawan, or litter, in which she was seated; and there might have been a kangaroo or a monkey within, for anything we could see, the very magnificent curtains and fringe entirely covering the litter, so that there was no sign of any occupant. However, the officer commanding the escort afterwards conveyed to the

Consular body her Highness's thanks and compliments.

There were a vast number of Turkish ladies—all holy pilgrims—in the Sultana's suite, and several harems of other pilgrims, who took advantage of the escort, and accompanied the cavalcade, all equally veiled, though in coarser stuff, which hid them from the vulgar gaze.

It is on such occasions as these, when the Sultan himself, or any member of his family, travels, that bridges and roads in Turkey stand any chance of repair. We of Alexandretta benefitted to this extent—that an old bridge was repaired, which led over a morass in the centre of the marshes. Previously to this occasion, it had remained for years in a very bad condition, though the caravans to Aleppo passed over it daily, and seldom without a camel or two sprawling in the water, to the great damage of the clean new bales of Manchester manufactures slung upon their backs, and which, by

some unexplained process pursued at Aleppo were duly condemned, and paid for by the underwriters at Lloyds, as damaged by *sea-water*. The pilgrims from Constantinople to Mecca pass annually through Alexandretta, and there is a sad deficiency in their numbers when, after many months' absence, they return.

The facilities for communication between England and Alexandretta have within the last year been greatly augmented. There is now a monthly steamer direct to Liverpool, touching at Beyrout, Alexandria, Malta, and Gibraltar; and a bi-monthly packet, which coasts from Smyrna to Alexandretta. The Government Tartar post coming from Damascus and Aleppo, passes every Monday through Alexandretta, and conveys letters and specie through Asia Minor to Smyrna and Constantinople. The journey is performed from Alexandretta to the capital, by these untiring and extraordinary Turkish messengers, in six days; caravans are forty days in accomplishing the same distance. This is proverbial. "Sow your pool (beans)," say

the Arabs of Scanderoon, "and go to Stamboul: on your return you may gather your crop," eighty days being apparently requisite to bring this vegetable to maturity.

The European community at Alexandretta are free from all diseases but fever and ague. Not so the natives. Bad nutriment, damp lodgings, and protracted fasts, subject them to diarrhœa and dropsical diseases; and the autumn is more fatal to them than summer proved to us. Poor, ignorant, bigoted creatures, pallid and wore out with disease, they could not be induced by any argument, or fear of finding death, to take broth or nutritious boiled meat, because it happened to be a fast, and though we have even got the priest to promise them absolution, it was without effect. Patients with violent inflammatory diseases would subsist upon olives and dried figs, oils and unripe fruit. I observed that the women in particular were most scrupulous in observing their fasts; and yet, while these outward observances were rigidly adhered to, pilferings and lying, cursing and

slandering, and intrigues of every kind were the main-spring of their hearts, and daily and hourly in practice.

The women and children of Alexandretta are, taking the general run, without the slightest pretensions to good looks. The domestic occupations of the women consist in sweeping out their huts of a morning, baking, washing, and cooking. Saturday is the prescribed day for washing, and a great variety of strange-coloured and quaintly-shaped habiliments, flanked on either side with an alarming array of rags, may then be seen suspended to poles, or cords, opposite to each hut. On waking in the morning, the first care of the housewife is to set about her husband's breakfast, as he, being a porter or some way connected with the works of the factory, must be away and doing by sunrise. If it happen to be fast time, a large plate of olives, a platter of burghul (a preparation made of wheat, boiled and dried in the sun, and then ground at a



mill), cold from last night, a few red chillies, and an onion or two, or perhaps a salad of garlic and sour pomegranates, are set before him, to satisfy his cravings. These he generally washes down with a large potation of spirits, and then hies away till mid-day. By that time, dirty little nondescript bundles, that have been lying in a heap on a still filthier mattress in the corner, begin to show evident symptoms of life and returning animation; these are the labourer's hopeful progeny. If any doubt is entertained by the anxious mother as to the fact of their being awake or not, this is speedily set at rest by a simultaneous screeching and squalling from the infant group, who are only pacified by her repeated assurances that breakfast is ready and waiting. They then crawl forth, and squat in a circle round the dhibs (a species of molasses, made from grape juice), which they attack with wooden spoons, each taking care to have his just allowance, which is not to be had without fighting for. When all are

satisfied, so that they can neither speak nor move, they creep back to their corner, and fall fast asleep again.

Now the wife sets to work in earnest, rolls up the bedding, and stows it away in a crevice made in the wall for that purpose; sweeps the floor; sprinkles water all over it; lights the fire; scours the platters and spoons; prepares the mid-day meal, and then sets about her morning oblations. Both men and women are very cleanly, and wash their face, hands, and feet frequently during the day. Their children, however, are neglected in this respect, till they get old enough to imitate their parents, and the mother religiously avoids washing them, except on Saturdays, as they always cry at the sight of water, and this touches her on a tender point. Saturday, however, is devoted to a general scrubbing, beginning with the good man of the house, then the elder children, and then mamma herself. As to the small fry, they are thrown together into a large cauldron, despite kickings and yells, and fairly boiled into a state

of purity. Of course the water is not at scalding heat, but in the Turkish baths I have sometimes felt the excessive heat of the water most painfully.

The native inhabitants are generally civil and obliging to Europeans. This, in a great measure, arises from their being dependant on them for employment and food, the whole population being directly or indirectly employed by the Consuls, and other European residents. The bazaars at Scanderoon are a miserable affair, badly situated and worse supplied. No butcher resides in the place: when meat is killed for the inhabitants, the Europeans, or the shipping, the owner of the sheep or goats brings them down to the sea-side, and they are there slaughtered and disposed of. Bakers are plentiful, and the bread is of a very fair quality. This arises from the port being frequented by Cypriote Greeks, who have introduced the art of baking. Through the winter, the few Europeans meet of an evening alternately at each other's houses, where they have a cup of tea,

a quiet chat, a song, or a tune on the guitar, and a round game at Loto.

Travellers wisely steer clear of Alexandretta, so that the only novelty is the arrival of an English vessel, or a stray passenger bound for Aleppo. The exertions made by the Europeans in gardening and farming have produced very satisfactory results. They have also abundance of turkeys, geese, and ducks, besides a very fine specimen of Bussorah fowls. Potato crops were, when I left, promising; green peas abundant; and lettuces, radishes, and cauliflowers were flourishing. The natives used to laugh at the pains we took in gardening; their forefathers never dreamt of such a thing, and, of course, they could not do better than follow in their steps. Our success, however, seemed to open their eyes a little, and very soon many came begging for seeds.

On the celebration of the Greek festival of Easter, it was a custom long established, that the European factors should visit the more respectable class of natives, such as maga-

zineers, interpreters, &c., at their own domiciles. This was a kind of return visit for the one they paid on Christmas-day. On these occasions we were regaled at each house with sweetmeats, wines, liqueurs, pipes, and coffee; and by the time we had completed the round, we were generally so stuffed with the things forced upon us, as to feel uncomfortable for the rest of the day. Natives always keep it up for three days and three nights, during which time they eat and drink, and smoke and dance, and sing without intermission. The effects of this excess are plainly visible on their return to work in their bloodshot, heavy-looking eyes, and the almost entire loss of their voices.

A carousal is their summit of enjoyment. If there is a wedding, or a burial, a child born, or a child baptized, a fast coming, or a fast over, the event is always celebrated by a debauch, and every man goes to bed, or is carried to it, in a state of intoxication. The women are generally sober, but are intemperate as regards eating; and as for the children, their

appetites are insatiable. And here I may mention, that there is an extraordinary resemblance between a Scanderoon frog and a Scanderoon child. I have often watched a frog on the banks of a quagmire, basking in the sun, and the large bloated body and withered little legs of the animal are too faithfully represented in the child, who may be daily seen squatted outside its parents' hut. How the children ever grow up to be robust and strong men is inexplicable to me; but that they do improve is beyond doubt.

The villages in the vicinity of Scanderoon supply the bazaars plentifully with vegetables and fruit in the season. The vegetables produced are beans of various sorts, cucumbers, turnips, turnip-radishes, pumpkins, the love-apple or Tomatta spinach, the barniah, a vegetable common in India, and the badanjarn, likewise of Indian origin, and known also in the south of France. The fruit consists of apples, pears, peaches, pomegranates, apricots, melons,

and grapes; all, however, of a very inferior quality, except the grapes. Of these latter, they make black and red wines for home consumption, and some of the wine is really good. The natives boil their grapes in the process, which makes their wines sweet and heady, and most unpalatable to Europeans. The sea supplies excellent red mullets, and several other fish, including at times sardines and tonnies; but I never saw any species of shell-fish. Living is certainly cheap, as the following brief table may show:

|                                | <i>s.</i> | <i>d.</i> |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| A loaf of bread . . . .        | 0         | 2         |
| Fresh butter the oke of 2 lbs. |           |           |
| 11 oz. . . . .                 | 0         | 2½        |
| Fowls each . . . . .           | 0         | 2½        |
| Mutton per rototo, 5¼ lbs. . . | 1         | 0         |
| Rice „ „ . . . . .             | 0         | 7½        |
| Fish „ „ . . . . .             | 0         | 4         |

And so on, in proportion, with everything else.

As regards fresh milk and butter, Scanderoon is better supplied than any other part of Syria, which is strange, considering the scanty pasturage the cows have to subsist upon.



## CHAPTER IX.

The environs of Alexandretta — Excursions to the villages—Story of an umbrella—Diverting adventure — The battle-field of antiquity — Alexander and Darius.

To those residing at Alexandretta, it is most important to contrive some means of absenting themselves, as much as their occupations will admit of, during the summer months. If it be only for a good night's repose, this is desirable ; for what with fleas, mosquitoes, sand-flies, heat, and prickly heat, the tortures one undergoes on a summer's night are almost inconceivable.

Unfortunately there are no healthy villages within such a convenient distance, as to admit of a fever-stricken factor riding in and out every day of his life ; but a tent may be pitched upon some of the hills in the immediate vicinity ; although, unless attended by a retinue of servants, this proceeding would not be altogether safe. Moreover, the very heavy dews that fall during the summer nights, would soon make a tent unwholesomely damp.

We visited all the villages in the vicinity of Scanderoon, for the purpose of ascertaining which was best adapted as a summer retreat, and finally fixed upon Beilan.

The following is a brief description of these villages :

Nargheslek is inhabited by Armenian peasants, who cultivate lands, the property of the Beys of Beilan. Here several of the Greek families from Alexandretta seek refuge from the heat and sickness of the summer ; and for a trifling consideration, are permitted by the

peasants to make common use with themselves of their houses and kitchens. Everybody sleeps at this season, when rain seldom or ever falls, on platforms raised on four poles, and thatched over with dry leaves. The house and garden allotted to the use of the French Consul, was an exception to the general rule, being the private property of a Greek carpenter, named Hosta Ibrahim, who had not only constructed a very neat cottage, but surrounded it with a garden very tastefully laid out. He had none in the world but himself and wife to care for; and as no persuasion could induce him to follow his craft during the summer months, especially at such a place as Scanderoon, where he resided six months in the year, his leisure hours were spent in the improvement and adornment of his garden and cottage. Here they were glad to see such as could spare time to visit them; and on Sundays a pretty strong party would sometimes muster there. The ride and the mountain air used to sharpen our appetites; and seated

under the shade of the lofty walnut-trees, with a little rivulet of crystal water murmuring by us, we were well prepared to partake of the hospitable cheer of our kind and excellent host. The fruit here was remarkably fine, and the smoke and cup of coffee after it, followed by a siesta on the soft, green bank, were agreeable in the extreme. I recal these excursions with pleasure. They are bright spots in my recollections of Scanderoon life, otherwise so gloomy and monotonous. At Nargheslik, there were some pleasant walks and good partridge shooting ; but it was completely out of the way of the high road, and one might remain for weeks without any news from Scanderoon.

The next village we visited was Ascar-Beylik, only half an hour's ride from Scanderoon. It is built in an elevated position, and contains only eighteen houses, with pretty little gardens and vineyards, and a rill of fine cool water.

But the nights here are as hot as down below ; mosquitoes are as plentiful, and even fever exists : so that this would never suit as a summer retreat. Neither did Ackchay, another village about the same distance, on the Pyass road, offer greater advantages. The gardens were pretty and thickly shaded, and the water good ; but besides being quite out of the world, it was hot and unhealthy, and swarmed with mosquitoes. It contains only seven huts, and is in a very questionable position for safety, some robbers' haunts being in the vicinity.

Karaach, a large village containing some three thousand souls, and inhabited entirely by Fellahs, or idolaters, next invites attention. It is situated on the other side of the marsh behind Scanderoon, and not ten minutes' ride from it. The mulberry gardens, which here also belong to the Bey of Beilan, are very fine, and are well cultivated, producing annually a considerable supply of silk, which is gathered in

by the Bey, and sold to merchants in Aleppo. The houses are neatly built and cleanly, and some of the gardens produce a large variety of fine figs, in addition to other fruits : vegetables, too, are plentiful. But Karaach is invaded by the Scanderoon air and Scanderoon vapours, and the heat is the same, while vermin are more plentiful, and the water is not half so good.

There yet remains Arsous, a sea-port village, eight hours from Scanderoon, and not far from Cape Kanyr. The distance is, of course, an insurmountable objection to its affording a suburban residence. I visited the place in company with M. G——, the French Consul ; and a memorable excursion it was. The road the whole way lay close alongside the sea-shore, so that the glare was intolerable, even at first setting off, but when we got about half way, the lofty range of sand-hills, which were like so many huge mirrors held up to the sun, nearly

blinded us, and gave me such a violent headache that I could scarcely keep my saddle. The old Frenchman, who had, during his forty years residence, acquired experience in these jaunts, and was furnished with a huge white cotton umbrella and a monstrous pair of green spectacles, was laughing at my folly in coming without these indispensables. His mirth made me exceedingly wrathful, but soon afterwards I had the gratification of seeing the tables turned on him—the quiet old nag he was riding, without any previous warning, suddenly throwing itself down on the sand, for the purpose of having a good roll. After a good laugh, I extracted G—— by main force from the stirrups, as his situation, from the fact of his being dressed in loose Oriental cloth trousers, was becoming perilous, and it was impossible that he could ever, without assistance, release his feet. With some difficulty, I succeeded in getting him safely on his feet, with the loss only

of his cotton umbrella, much damaged in the joints ; and after having vented a few maledictions on the unconscious horse, we set forward again. He was too much occupied, however, in guiding his steed, and too much crest-fallen to recover his good-humour, and he kept on bewailing the loss of his white umbrella, and was not appeased till, on our arrival at the village, a native lent him one to return with next day.

G—— told me an amusing anecdote of an umbrella he had in his possession—a red one, red having always been his favourite colour until this incident occurred. At the period that the English bombarded Syria, and drove the Egyptians out, Alexandretta came in for a portion of powder and shot. M. G—— and his family were at that period there, but expecting that the Egyptian troops then in Asia Minor, would pass through on their flight to Egypt, and would as surely be fired upon by



the men-of-war in harbour, he considered it the safest course to retreat to his country house in Nargheslik, so as to be out of harm's way. He accordingly started with his family and servants at about ten A.M., passing through the marshes, which were then dry, and pursuing the route unmolested, till they came to the high ground some two miles behind Alexandretta. Here the road to Nargheslik lies under a bank, which was in some places covered with myrtle bushes and in some parts bare. M. G—— had a red umbrella, and Madame had a red umbrella, and the two eldest children had each a red umbrella, as had each of the nurses, and each of the other servants, forming quite an array. One of the look-out men on board a frigate at this moment turned upon them, and the only object distinguishable at that distance was something red, creeping amongst the bushes: he concluded that they were a party of Egyptian soldiers, in stealthy retreat; and to the incon

ceivable consternation and astonishment of the Consul's family, a heavy fire was accordingly opened upon them, causing them to jump from their steeds, and so on foot creep back to Scanderoon. Subsequently, circumstances led to an explanation of the affair, and ever since, red has been renounced by old G——.

Arsous is the name given to two separate villages, one situated at the mouth of a little river, where small native vessels can enter, trading from the opposite coast of Ayas, from Cyprus, and from Egypt: the other, about half a mile inland. We went first to the smaller Arsous, a village containing some one hundred and fifty souls. Quantities of firewood and timber are exported hence to Egypt, and it imports principally salt. The larger Arsous contains about two thousand inhabitants, all cultivators and tillers of the soil. The silk, wheat, and maize produced here is, like that of the other villages, the property of

the Beys of Beilan, who give one-third of the produce to the peasants, as wages for their labour. Fowls are abundant and cheap, as indeed are all articles of food, but the climate is bad. The heat is intense, and the place is over-run with snakes and other venomous reptiles.

On the opposite shore of the gulf is the village of Ayas, chiefly inhabited by Turcomen Arabs, who are born and bred notorious thieves. To such a pitch does their admiration of roguery extend, that a man's capabilities are measured by the standard of his peculations. When a young man is desirous of obtaining some fair maiden of his tribe in marriage, the first requisition on the part of the lady's father is, that he produce proofs of his being worthy of such a distinction, and these proofs must evince the expertness and cunning he has displayed in thieving. If they prove satisfactory, a valuation of the maiden is made, and

her price is generally estimated at so many head of cattle, and perhaps some few piastres. The wedding then takes place, when the bride produces, to decorate the nuptial tent, the carpet on which all her maiden skill has for many years been exercised, and which was originally commenced for this purpose. For fineness, yet strength of texture, for brilliancy of colours, and elegance of design, few carpets can surpass these productions. They rarely fall into the hands of a stranger, as only dire necessity will force an Arab to part with one. The women in particular venerate them as emblems of connubial happiness. They are to them what a wedding-ring is to a Christian. Carpets of an inferior quality are made expressly for sale, and may be had at a reasonable price.

It is supposed that the vast plain extending from Ayas to Byass, which now affords pasturage to the numerous flocks and herds of

these Turcomen, was the field where the armies of Alexander and Darius met ; but on this hypothesis, I do not venture to offer an opinion.

The large lagoons off Ayas afford shelter to innumerable turtle, which are occasionally caught by the crews of men-of-war. Her Majesty's steamer 'Hecate' caught upwards of three hundred in a very few hours ; and it was rare sport to see the tars turning them over, or getting turned over themselves, as the turtle made a rush to break through their ranks, and escape to sea. A small river discharges itself into the sea here, which is, however, navigable by boats for several miles up.

We saw all that was to be seen in Arsous—snakes included—in a short time, and gladly set out on our return, taking good care to choose a fitter time for the journey than we had chosen in coming. We left by moonlight at

two A.M., and so got to Scanderoon before the great heat of the day, quite pleased to think that we had found a place that was decidedly worse than even Alexandretta.

## CHAPTER X.

Retreat in the Mountains—Perilous travelling—A Night adventure—Turkish news-mongers—A barber's shop—Mysteries of trade—A Mahommedan anchorite—The Beys of Beilan—A Syrian Doctor—Armenian women.

THE change from Alexandretta to Beilan is most agreeable, the weather being so cool up here that in the early morning and evening, I was glad to have recourse to a warm cloak or coat. Every morning a heavy mist covered the place, but soon after the sun had risen

above the mountains, this was dispelled, and then the weather was most exhilarating. The continual murmuring of numberless cascades, which rushed over the rocky precipices in every direction, and the pleasant little streams, that were conducted through each house, and formed little fountains in the centre of the court-yards, were cheering objects on a hot summer's day ; and the low moaning sound of the night-breeze, as it rustled through the wild mountain woods, made one feel more comfortable within doors. There were no mosquitoes hovering round, and no jackals howled without : frogs and other loathsome reptiles were equally scarce. The little plaintive note of the night-owl, regularly echoed by its distant companion, was rather agreeable than otherwise ; and the clear, healthy atmosphere made sleep both refreshing and invigorating — not the listless, restless, troubled, wary thing it was in Scanderoon, where, at dawn,



aching limbs and head told sadly of the night's unrest.

Beilan is situated in a gorge between two lofty ranges of mountains, through which, at all seasons of the year, there is a free circulation of air. It has been known to be blowing nearly a gale up here, whilst those in the plains below were panting for a breath of air. As the mountains on either side descend gradually towards each other, and at the foot are only separated by a ravine or torrent, the inhabitants have been compelled to construct their houses up the sides of either declivity; so that the roofs of the ground-tier of houses form the terraces of the second, and the second of the third, and so on the whole way up to the top. This gives the place more the appearance of a gigantic flight of steps, cut out of the mountains, than anything else, especially as the houses are within a shade of the same colour.

The entrance to this place, coming from

Scanderoon, is singularly strong in natural defences, and might be rendered impregnable by art, as the road leads round circuitous mountains, conducting you to within gun-shot of the main pass or natural gates, from which it is separated by a fearful ravine, and then winds along the edge of this ravine for full half an hour before it arrives at the pass. Here the scenery is magnificent : on one side is a splendid view of the hill and dale, river, rivulet and plain, which lies between Arsous, Beilan and Scanderoon, whilst the sea forms a vast boundary to the prospect ; on the other side are innumerable lofty mountains, thickly covered with forests, whilst those in the immediate vicinity of Beilan, are entirely bare and sterile ; and at your feet lies the town itself, with the pretty little ravine below it, teeming with fruit gardens, with a mausoleum on an eminence in the centre, and a torrent of foaming water dashing down the middle. Here the descent

is frightfully precipitous, even for mules ; and I have, shuddering, watched poor laden camels coming down, rolling like ships in a storm, picking their way with cautious steps ; for the least slip would be sure destruction, and cause them and their burthens to be hurled down a fearful abyss.

The streets in Beilan resemble those of Malta, "streets of stairs," with occasional patches of loose earth and stones, up and down which one slips, and scrambles over, at the risk of breaking one's limbs, particularly if weak about the joints, which is generally the case with ague patients. The house I occupied was, however, not fifty yards above the Aleppo road, and being once on this level, I was enabled to take long walks in the evening, though the sameness soon wearied me ; and when, after a month's respite from ague, I found myself getting a little strength, I could not resist the temptation of a change, which invariably brought

on a return of the old complaint. On one occasion, when I had strayed rather further than usual, my attention being engrossed by the charming scenery, night came upon me unawares, and, losing the way, I found myself obliged, in such dense darkness, to come to a stand. In this immovable position, I sat down on the damp earth, exposed to the heavy dew of the night, and to the still less pleasant prospect of visits from hyenas and chetahs, till nigh upon midnight, when some natives, who had been sent out with torches, luckily discovered me, and then, by the aid of their flambeaux, I discovered that, by taking a wrong descent, I had come upon a narrow point jutting out from the range of mountains, with a precipice on either side of very great depth. This effectually cured my taste for rambling, and I thenceforward confined my jaunts to the little valley just under the town. Here I found some shooting, there being a number of beccafigoes (delicious little

birds) in the fig-trees. When weary, some wide-spreading mulberry afforded shade under which to rest, and where one could smoke the heat of day away, listening the while to water from the cascade roaring through the clattering wheels of a flour-mill.

There are many sweetly picturesque spots about Beilan; but withal, after the first charm of novelty has worn off, it is dull and lonely. The perpetual sound of rushing waters, and the low moaning of the breeze, which alone break the intense stillness that reigns throughout the day, invest the place with an indescribable sadness. The beccafigo, or a stray lark or so, are the only birds I ever saw in Beilan. The bazaar consists of one long street, of about half a mile in extent, flanked with a coffee-house and some huge old trees at either end, and a torrent of water rushing down the centre. The first thing I saw on entering the bazaar, was a collection of old

worthies with cloaks and grey beards, seated on benches under the before-mentioned trees, smoking pipes and narghilehs, and drinking small cups of coffee. These were retired tradesmen, enjoying their *otium cum dig.* with all Oriental gravity. They saluted us with a "fadthal," which means, in one word, "Favour us with your company." On my sitting down, they were really pleased, and treated me with coffee and a smoke. Then they asked my opinion on the latest news; for the Turkish goot-post (postman), to and from Constantinople, passes through the town weekly, and the Tartar has generally a good supply of alarming political intelligence. This latest news is generally an "old song to a new tune," that the Turks have had a sharp engagement with the Russians, and have slain fifty thousand, and taken twenty thousand Russian prisoners. The only difference is, that the number of prisoners and slain changes occasionally. If you laugh,

these old worthies become highly indignant ; so I used to look mysteriously grave, and say I knew nothing of the matter, at which they would nod at each other significantly, and stroke their beards, whispering to one another, he knows more than he chooses to tell. When at a loss for information, they would invariably ask me if it were true that the English had a Queen, and on answering in the affirmative, *Mashalla ! Mashalla !* would pass from mouth to mouth, the beards again be put in motion, and all of them set to work, tooth and nail, chanting verses from the Koran in a low, grumbling voice. As I presumed these were not over complimentary to my country, their utterance was a signal for me to bear away, possibly to undergo a like ordeal a few yards further on.

The shops are arranged on either side of the streets, each shop being about eight feet by six ; in the centre of which, cross-legged and

tailor-fashion, the owner is seated in all the dignity of a tradesman. Opposite the coffee-house is sure to be the barber's, for those who undergo the operation of being shaved, are generally faint when it is all over, and require such stimulants as a cup of coffee and a smoke. Shaving indeed is no slight operation for a native in these parts. First the barber scalds the wretched individual's face and head with boiling hot water, at which he would possibly complain, were not his mouth effectually stopped with soap-suds. Then, while the head and face, and the eyes and ears, and neck are white with suds, and covered with little air bubbles, the barber, armed with a huge horse-hair bag, rubs and scrubs and polishes up the soap, till it effectually disappears and gives place to a blood-red colour. This is the head of the sufferer, under the influence of friction. Water in a freezing state is now brought into requisition, and instantly allays the inflammation, which



is succeeded by a ghastly whiteness. Luke-warm water is finally applied, and then the razor, after the usual flourishes and stropping, comes into earnest play, and leaving a very small patch of hair on the very top of the head makes a clean sweep right down—hair, whiskers, beard, and everything save the much favoured and highly curled moustache. These operations over, cracking of all the minor joints ensues, and the fingers go off like a small battery of crackers : then the barber stuffs his two fore-fingers into the sufferer's ears, and gives his head such a shake as, one would imagine, would be sufficient to addle a man's brain for the remainder of his life. This is the last infliction, and the task is now completed, and the turban replaced. The fee being paid, coffee and chibouks are brought across the street into the hummum, just opposite, where the body undergoes even more violent treatment than has just been visited on the head, and then the man has

done with barbers and with baths for a week.

Next to the bath is the butcher's, and opposite a bread shop—for the bread is baked at home and brought here for sale. A cook's shop is next in order, emitting a strong savour of fried onions and garlic. The rustic having bought his loaf, comes here for a stick of cabobs, small bits of meat, with alternate layers of onions, roasted on wooden skewers, or a bit of cheese. A bowl of lebon or curdled cream, a raw onion, a dozen cucumbers, and about half a hundred apricots, compose his light and digestible breakfast. But he has a long way to trudge on foot, and a hot day before him, and the thought of the journey makes him more hungry than usual so that he is obliged to run over and fetch another couple of loaves, and comes back for another stick of cabobs; and even when he has eaten all this, his appetite is still so keen, that the cook is obliged to keep a sharp look out for


the skewer, which would otherwise be chewed to extract the flavour.

Fine healthy fellows are the muleteers, and the owners of gedeeshes, or hack horses, hired to carry away goods; and have their own and a horse's appetite. They are the best customers the cook's shop has, for they come into Beilan just at the right time of day, and having started from Scanderoon at daylight, have just had a nice cool walk without being fatigued, and the morning air on the mountains has made them ravenous. As the regular caravans, which are always under a chief, only take or bring burthens to and from Aleppo, the peasants of Beilan, and those in Alexandretta and the surrounding villages, always endeavour to lay by a sufficiency to purchase themselves a good strong hack horse, for which ample occupation is always found. These hacks, or as they are here called gedeeshes, are used for transporting silk and goods to and from Antioch, Suedia and other places. When

not thus occupied, the proprietors load them with firewood from the mountains for their own use, or for sale, or carry fruit and vegetables to market, wheat to the mill, and in twenty other ways make them serviceable. Hence the owner seldom or ever mounts his own animal, and is very careful of its being well fed, cleaned and shod: in fact, devotes more care and attention to it than he does to his wife or children, and be the journey ever so long, always trudges behind on foot. Next to the geedish, his most valued possession is his yellow Turcoman boots, with rough hairy soles, which are laced with leather strops up to the knee. Should the road be very muddy, or strewn with sharp stones, off come the boots, and slinging them on his shoulders, he prefers to expose his bare feet to the cold and damp and chances of laceration, rather than run the risk of injuring them. These boots are intended more for show than use, and when new and brightly coloured, with

the addition of a gaudy carpet-pattern overcoat, are supposed to have quite an overpowering effect on the hearts of the peasant maidens.

Next to the cook-shop, is a silversmith's, where may be had nose-ornaments for the Turcoman ladies, and silver bangles for the ankles of all classes of Syrian ladies. A copper-smith close by, keeps up a perpetual hammering and clattering; and then there is a kind of restaurateur, where one may purchase large lumps of snow, iced-sherbet, sweetmeats, and dried fruit. The next is a musician, and plays incessantly on a little guitar, made of a dried gourd. Nothing stops him, except a customer; and even then the force of habit is so strong, he sings out the weight and price to some fashionable Turkish air. He is the very reverse of what Hogarth's enraged musician was; for though his neighbour, the copper-smith, effectually drowned every other sound within half a mile, he never heeded the interruption in the slightest degree.



To strangers, looking on from a little distance, he would have the appearance of a maniac. When the little barber has nobody to shave, he is sure to be here, being an amateur, though not a professor of music.

After this Apollo, a quiet, sober set of retail-dealers are boxed up opposite to each other. Chintzes, tobacco, Timbac raisins, dried figs olives, rice, lentils, combs, and looking-glasses, spices and honey, are the usual articles exposed to view, with, every here and there, a long string of Turkish slippers, salt-fish, and garlic. I found some of the occupants chatting with passing friends, and others smoking, others reading aloud, and some few asleep, perfectly secure of their neighbour's honesty. At the end of these, I came to the opposition coffee-house, with an opposition tree, and opposition elders, a caravansarai for animals, a farrier's, and a day-school; and beyond, the Custom-officer's office, at the musty window of which the little

old man was seated, keeping a sharp look-out. No sooner did he spy a load coming by, than he crouched behind the corner of the door, and should the peasant neglect to present the necessary pass, out he flew, and seized the horses' bridles, pouring forth a torrent of abuse, and kicking and striking the Herculean peasant, who might have crushed him with a blow, but he would as soon think of flying, as making the least retort. So he pockets all the affronts, and goes away quite meek and subdued, and possibly minus a few piastres.

This completed the bazaar, and brought me to the Aleppo high road, where there were only a few stray Armenian houses. But I ought to mention that in the centre of the bazaar, is the entrance to the mosque, from the minaret of which the call to prayer is regularly heard.

About the most singular personage to be seen in Beilan, is one who is constantly haunting the bazaars. Morning, noon, and night, there

he is sure to be ; sometimes on the roof, sometimes in the street, sometimes for hours as immovable as a statue, and at others utterly restless. This individual is a Turkish saint, an Abyssinian by descent, who has renounced the pomps and vanities of the world, and adheres so rigidly to his vows, that he has entirely left off wearing apparel, and will on no account adopt any kind of covering. There are in Turkey several impostors of this genus, actuated solely by mercenary, or even worse motives ; but this poor wretch is evidently mad. He seldom or ever enters any private domicile ; never asks for food, and swallows such as is offered without any sign of relish or satisfaction. What is most extraordinary, is, that heat and cold have apparently no effect upon him. He sleeps under the hottest sun, and while exposed to the extreme cold of a frosty night. He never speaks, laughs, or cries, nor seems to take any notice of passing events,



nor to evince any of those passions to which human beings are subjected. Turks are very superstitious, and allow great privileges to this class of anchorites. They are even permitted to enter the precincts of the harem, a liberty denied to a father and brother. The history of this idiot is, that being a slave in the service of a rich Bey of Beilan, he chanced to be smitten by the charms of one of his wives. The lady slighted the approaches of such a lover, as well she might; and being exceedingly sensitive, he went mad. Such is the character turned thus loose on society.

Beilan contains about three thousand five hundred inhabitants, of whom two-thirds are Armenians, and one third Turks. The Turkish quarter is entirely separated from the Christian, but they in general agree well together, and are even partners in gardens and other speculations. The place is governed by a Mutzelim, and has a Cadi and a Mufti, with an Armenian Kekiah,

chosen by the people. The Mufti is the oldest inhabitant of the place, and has thirty-six sons grown up and married. The Megilis, or council, is composed of the foregoing, with the assistance of the beys, or nobles, of Beilan. Of these, the principal are Mustafa Bey, Hadgi Bey, Abdalla Bey, Houssan Bey, and Izzet Bey, all very influential men, from being natives of the place, immediately descended from Pashas, and possessed of great wealth, as also extensive landed property.

About the period that Kutchuk Ali Oglu flourished at Byass, and for several years previously, the whole mountain-range from Taurus to Beilan was in a state of open rebellion, and divided amongst a number of petty chiefs, who had each their separate tribes, and a defined portion of territory. Many of these rebels had once held high posts under the Sultan's government, but as at that time decapitation, exiling for life, and confiscation of

property and lands, were of very frequent occurrence, and all parties were equally amenable to these violent proceedings, from the Grand Vizier himself down to the lowest Ryah; such functionaries as found themselves destined to occupy posts in the immediate vicinity of these strongholds, determined to avail themselves of the defences afforded them by nature and position, and formed a kind of confederation. In this they entered into a treaty, offensive and defensive, by which it was stipulated that they should by no means interfere with each other's local governments, or encroach on one another's territories, and only meet and act together in cases where an assault from the Sublime Porte might threaten their mutual destruction. The principle of honour amongst thieves was for some time strictly observed by the allies, the only one who proved incorrigible being the famed Kutchuk Ali Oglu.

One of the most influential of the confederates

was Moustafa Pasha, of Brousa, an educated man for those times, and whose character was a strange compound of good sense, craft, and knavery. His territory extended from Beilan to Cape Kanzyr, including Scanderoon, Karaach, Arsous, and a large range of fertile plains. This land was then in an uncultivated and neglected state, owing to the insecurity of the husbandmen, who were perpetually exposed to the extensive system of avanizing then practised, and still not quite out of date, by the petty officers of the local government. If a poor man had a cow, or a few sheep or fowls, a donkey or horse, or a small patch of cultivated ground, these cormorants were sure to pounce upon him in the name of their immediate superiors, and as no other salary was awarded to the employés, than such as they could, by their own cunning and intrigue, contrive to obtain, by fair means or foul, the complaints of injured parties were winked at by the officials, and the only redress


the unfortunate peasant obtained, was the *bas-tinado* or the prison. Hence, even those amongst the inhabitants who had by hard labour and industry amassed a few *piastres*, dared make no use of their earnings in bettering their condition in life, but burying the treasure under-ground, patiently waited for better times, living meanwhile in the most abject misery.

Moustafa Pasha abolished every kind of taxation, and held out rewards to such amongst the inhabitants as should by their industry, and perseverance, cultivate the long-neglected soil. A *disme*, after three years' cultivation, was all he pretended to lay claim to; and he even supplied the peasants with oxen, ploughs, and other aids for furrowing and tilling the land, allotting to each man his portion, as freehold property, and procuring seeds, grain, mulberry-slips, and every other requisite. Now had the long-looked for time arrived. The entrapped *Ryahs*, rapturous in their encomiums

on their new governor, swore eternal fidelity to him ; and such as had amassed money, brought forth their treasures from the bowels of the earth. Neat farm-houses were constructed and well stocked. Husbandmen worked with a good will. Twelvemonths had scarcely passed when valleys and mountains were laughing with shocks of corn ; and mulberry-gardens spread on every side. Three or four years passed in the same satisfactory way. The disme was regularly collected ; the Ryahs amassed wealth, and the first crop of silk was produced from the gardens of Karaach and Arsous, proving better than their best anticipations.

Meanwhile, the old Pasha had married four wives, and by each had a rising generation of sons and daughters, and how to leave a suitable provision for this family, was now a serious consideration with him. At length, he chose secret emissaries, who were sent forth amongst

the surrounding villages to take note of the best cultivated field, and silk plantations, and of the wealth and condition of the landholders. These emissaries soon returned, and the unhappy individuals noted by them were marked out for destruction. The bodies of some persons just interred at Beilan were secretly exhumed, and their throats cut from ear to ear, when they were conveyed at night from the town, and thrown into the ditches close by the houses of the unsuspecting millionaires, where they were discovered, as by chance, the next morning. The Pasha's emissaries then suborned false witnesses against five or six of the unfortunate men living in the immediate vicinity, and the poor wretches were cast into prison, where they had the alternative of death, or a surrender of their estates, which were regularly settled on the Pasha's children. Should they hesitate to come to these terms, they were sure to disappear in



some mysterious manner, and none dared ask a question on the subject. By this means, or by getting up a pretended robbery, when the stolen property was sure to be found concealed at the house of some wealthy Ryah, the whole of the gardens and lands gradually exchanged hands. The Pasha's children became virtual possessors ; and the original owners, in many cases the peasants employed by them to till the land, receiving as wages but one-fourth of the value of the produce, which is barely sufficient to procure them, for half the year, the common necessities of life ; and for the other half, they are compelled, as I have before shown, to borrow money from their landlords at exorbitant interest, which leaves them perpetually in their debt.

Ibrahim Pasha investigated many of the secrets connected with the tenures held by these Beys ; and if the Porte were to take the same trouble, it would be found that nearly the whole



of their various estates had been obtained by the most cruel injustice. At the departure of Moustafa Pasha, who was sent into exile when the rebel confederation was broken up, his wives and their respective families separated, still, however, inhabiting Beilan, where the present race of Beys were all born, and where they still retain their titles and dignities, exercising to this day many petty acts of violence and barbarity, of which the Porte is kept in careful ignorance. Moustafa Bey has several times been Mutzelim, and is generally liked in Beilan. Izzet Bey has been educated in Constantinople, and is a perfect gentleman in his manners, and a good Arabic and Turkish scholar. I believe him to be an exception to the general run, and an honest, upright, and honourable man. When I last saw him, he was in a rapid decline, and under the care of Dr. Mendelssohn, an experienced Prussian physician, who had still hopes of his recovery. Hadgi Bey is a sleepy,

miserly, avaricious character ; and Abdallah Bey, the youngest son, a sot, and a bigotted Frank-hater, held in detestation both by Turks and Christians.

The Armenians have a chapel at Beilan, where they have service every morning throughout the year an hour before daylight, be the weather what it may. So long as they can crawl out, devout people invariably attend their matins. As no bell is allowed to be suspended in their church, a large hollow sounding-board is struck with an immense wooden hammer, and this is so distinctly heard all over the place as to answer every purpose required.

Hadji Yacob, the British agent at Beilan, has for many years filled this post with zeal and credit. He was roughly used by the Egyptian troops on their evacuating Syria, and plundered both of money and goods, for which he has hitherto obtained no satisfaction. His house is the usual resort of English travellers,

and they have all had occasion to be much satisfied with his hospitable reception. The good Hadji is an Armenian, and enjoys the reputation of being a doctor, having a certain knowledge of medicinal herbs, which he administers in alarmingly strong doses—his theory being, that if a patient get better by the third day, he will recover; whereas, if he evince symptoms of being worse at that time, it is a bad case, and he leaves him to fate and his own constitution—about the best chance a sick man can obtain from the native practitioners of Syria.

A doctor is thought nothing of here, unless he resorts to violent remedies. I was told a curious anecdote of a *soi-disant* doctor, who acquired a great reputation in Beilan. He was much given to administering emetics, and having a very delicate patient, resorted as usual to this method of cure, leaving in the hands of the patient's brother three strong doses of emetic, which he directed should be ad-

ministered at intervals of three hours. The brother, finding that the first powder had no immediate effect, gave the unfortunate invalid the remaining two within five minutes. The result was violent sickness, succeeded by spasms and cramp, which, in a few hours, terminated fatally. Next day the doctor was astounded to learn, on inquiring, that his patient was dead, and evinced his concern in his face. "Never mind," said the brother, "it was so fated: but, Mashalla! you are a great doctor: the medicine you gave never ceased operating till the moment of my brother's death. It was a fine medicine, and if it couldn't cure him, nothing earthly could."

Hadji Yacob, though liberal as to quantity, was careful to use only simple remedies, some almost as harmless as that administered by an Italian renegade and refugee, who, having entered as a Medico in the Turkish service, was appointed to a regiment. An old acquaintance

in Italy, hearing of his success, and having just opened an apothecary's shop, wrote him a long and affectionate appeal, enclosing a list of the medicines sold at his store, and soliciting his support and those of his colleagues. The learned doctor, on looking down the catalogue, chanced to cast his eye on an article which was set down at an extremely low price, and thinking this would just suit for hospital use, in physicking the soldiers, and not being very particular as to the efficacy of the remedy, he sent for a large supply of this particular drug. What was his astonishment and indignation to find, on its arrival, that it was nothing more or less than common table salt, which, under the disguise of a scientific name, the doctor had fondly imagined to be some new-fangled patent cure for all known diseases.

Old Hadji is about as good a practitioner as this skilful man, but knows better what he is about. His brother, Sarkies, lives in the same

house, and having a slight knowledge of Italian, acts as a kind of interpreter. They have a vineyard on the mountains behind Beilan, which furnishes them with beck-maze, raisins, wine, and aqua vitæ. All the inhabitants have gardens and vineyards, which, in a great measure, support them, and some very fine fruit is produced in the vicinity. Mutton of a very superior quality is always to be had, and buffalo and goat flesh is frequently used.

The inhabitants, men, women, and children, are a fine healthy set, and some of the Armenian girls extremely beautiful. Like all other Oriental nations they marry very young, become mothers at thirteen, and grey-headed at thirty. Their costume is very peculiar, the men being always distinguishable by their long robes and dark turbans; the women by their peculiar head dress, which is decorated with something like the strap of a helmet, composed of old silver coins. A bride wears a massive silver

plate on the top of her fez, from which old coins hang in festoons, and this is only laid by on her becoming a mother, or in the event of the husband's death.

The natives of Beilan, Turks as well as Armenians, are quiet and peaceable in disposition, and very honest. I never once heard of a theft, all the time I was there. The Turks are very cleanly: the Armenians are the reverse. In winter, the cold is excessive, and there are heavy falls of snow. The wild boar makes its appearance, and is often shot; and one may be procured for a gazee (about 3s. 6d.), especially during the Armenian Lent. The skin, however, is retained by the natives, who sell it to the curriers of the place. We cured some very excellent hams of these boars, and found their flesh delicate and tender. Wolves, hyenas, chetahs, and even leopards, have been seen during severe winters, but they rarely approach the town.

Beilan is reckoned to be about three thousand

five hundred feet above the level of the sea, but I think it must be full four thousand feet. Alexandretta, situated in the heart of this region, would have kept pace with Beyrout, and have now been a densely populated and thriving town, had it not been for the drawback of its climate. It is owing solely to this, that it remains thinly inhabited, and merely a wretched village. The trade that passes through it, however, has been steadily augmenting for the last ten years.

In 1841, the number of British vessels that landed cargoes at Alexandretta from England was twenty. In 1850, the British shipping amounted to fifty vessels, and amongst these were many of a larger tonnage than had previously frequented the port. This increase has, in some small measure, augmented the population, and there are also a few more Europeans resident there. The houses, too, are improving, and where, in 1843, there was but one



tenable house, there are now four or five, and both warehouses and magazines have increased in number and size.

With Alexandretta and Byass, we take leave of Syria, and now enter Asia Minor.

## CHAPTER XI.

## ASIA MINOR.

Mersine — Turshish — Coursing and hawking — The plague of fleas — Heliopolis — The Seven Sleepers.

THE passage from Alexandretta to Mersine, the sea-port of Tarsous, or Tarshish, usually occupies twenty-four hours. At Mersine, there is a quarantine establishment against Syria and Egypt; and on arriving, I was subjected to five days' purification. This is a ridiculous farce, as any traveller, by landing an hour further on, might traverse Asia Minor without interruption.

Mersine is a small village, somewhat similar in size to Alexandretta, though infinitely more picturesque. It abounds with orange and mulberry-trees, and herein consists its superiority over Alexandretta ; for in the latter place, there is but one solitary palm-tree to be seen. There is a neatly built lazaretto ; and close by, are three or four pretty summer-houses, the property of gentlemen residing at Tarsous, who resort hither during the hot weather. A very prominent building on one of the prettiest capes is the property of Mr. W. Barker.

Mersine, though but an open roadstead, is much frequented during the summer months by French vessels, though even then, so soon as the sea-breeze sets in, such a surf gets up, that frequently all landing operations have to be suspended for a day or two. The town is twelve miles from Tarsous, but the road is so excellent and level, that one might easily drive

all the way in a carriage. Mersine is famous as a resort of the little bird called the frankolin, which is never disturbed, except during two months of the year.

From Mersine, I proceeded to Tarsous, where I spent two months with Mr. Clapperton, our hospitable Vice-Consul.

Tarshish, or Tarsous, the birth-place of St. Paul, and once no mean city of Silesia, is situated in the very centre of a vast plain, equidistant from, and bounded by, the sea on one side, and by the mighty range of the Taurus on the other. The modern town contains some very fine buildings and mosques, and is entirely walled in by massive masonry. Both the interior and exterior of the town are filthy in the extreme; and I found the walls outside heaped up with the carcasses of camels, oxen, horses, and other cattle, amongst which a murrain must have raged before my arrival. The streets were literally strewn with dead cats and

dogs. Fortunately, however, Mr. Clapperton's house was situated aloof from the town, as were the houses of all the Consuls, so that I was less annoyed by this accumulation than I might have been. During the winter, the climate was mild and agreeable, but in summer, the heat is said to be intense, and the inhabitants are subjected to virulent fevers, more fatal than those of Alexandretta.

Tarsous exports vast quantities of cattle into Egypt, though its commerce is almost entirely dependent on Smyrna, from which place European manufactures and goods are imported, and a few Smyrna merchants purchase the cotton produced in this district, and export it by European vessels. Grain is very plentiful; and in 1845, when there was a dearth all over Syria, Tarsous supplied its neighbours with many ship-loads of wheat and barley.

The European inhabitants amuse themselves by coursing-matches, and races; and Tarsous

is celebrated for its peculiarly swift-footed greyhounds. The surrounding plains abound with the caper-plant, which the natives collect at the proper season of the year in great quantities, and pickle in vinegar, or salt and water, for winter consumption. They also supply Syria with dried currants, which grow wild about the plains, though various unsuccessful attempts have been made to introduce the plant into Syria.

Hawking is the great pastime of the Turkish Effendis, and gentlemen residing at Tarsous ; and they have brought this sport to such perfection, that the hawks have been trained to strike even the fleet gazelle, in his lightning speed across the plains, by alighting on the poor timid animal's head, and then flapping its wings so violently as to stun and blind it. The poor creature, thus rendered helpless, then falls an easy prey to the greyhounds, which follow close at hand. Besides the greyhound, hawkers are

accompanied by pointers or spaniels ; and one European gentleman, who was greatly addicted to the pastime, shocked his brother sportsmen of the Moslem faith, by introducing into the field a young wild boar, which, having been trained with first-rate dogs, took naturally to the sport, and hunted as well and as orderly as any of his canine companions.

Fleas have established a very extensive colony at Tarsous. Amongst other preventives adopted by the inhabitants, and the various means resorted to, to rid themselves of these plagues, was one which was perfectly novel to me, and amused me not a little. The more respectable natives inhabited solely the upper rooms of their houses, and these rooms were all roughly floored, the planks not being grooved together, but having an opening of about an inch between each, through which a constant current of air came whistling up ; and these apertures were left for the express convenience

of fleas, which, as they crawled along, fell through into the regions below. Notwithstanding this precaution, however, I had good evidence that there still remained many thousands to be swept away, or they may possibly have vaulted backwards, through the crevices again.

I visited the ruins of Heliopolis, as also the famed cascades in the river Cydnis and the caves of the Seven Sleepers ; and beyond these, I can safely state that there is but little to be seen at Tarsous. The bazaars are pretty well supplied, and fruit and vegetables are abundant, but so are fevers ; and few dare to indulge in melons and apricots, which are often productive of the most baneful effects. I had the good luck to escape being attacked by fever during my brief sojourn, but this I attribute to the season, which proved unusually salubrious.

Accompanied by Mr. Clapperton, I started



for Adana, the chief town of this Pashalick, where we had been invited to be present at the nuptials of a young Cypriote lady, the daughter of a man under British protection.

## CHAPTER XII.

Adana—Bigoted Turks—A marriage procession—The  
Pass of Kulek Bogas—Hussan Effendi—Konia.

ADANA is a large and populous town, prettily situated on the banks of a river. In the centre of the river are moored innumerable little floating flour-mills, which in the distance appear like so many steamers, with their paddle wheels in full action. Unlike other Turkish towns, Adana is built in one long street of more than a mile in length. On either side of this street are the shops, magazines, and bazaars; and immediately behind, the closely walled up

private residences of the inhabitants, who are all Turks. In one part there is a long line of shoemakers' shops; and I found that the trade of shoemaking is, for some undiscovered reason, considered by the Moslems a very honourable one. The Turkish shoemakers are always fanatical; but in Adana they were beyond all endurance, and spat upon the ground and cursed us, as we passed the fronts of their shops.

Much were these people enraged at the brilliant marriage-procession got up to celebrate the nuptials of the young lady to whose wedding we had been invited. Such a thing had never before been heard of in the annals of Adana, as Christians daring to parade their streets in broad daylight, with musicians and flags, and hatted and capped Europeans, and, horror of horrors! some two dozen unveiled Christian women. The shoemakers would have torn us limb from limb, had they possessed the power; but the Pasha's lieutenants and

other subordinate officers, who were armed with appalling corbashes (whips), acted as a wholesome check upon their insolence; and many a bearded Turk got such a flogging that day, as he had never had from his childhood upwards. I believe every soul in Adana, man, woman and child, who could manage to crawl out of doors, was present to witness that extraordinary spectacle. The roofs of the houses were literally swarming with Turkish women and children, and when we got into the Greek Church, despite all the efforts of the vigilant and well-armed guards, the more inquisitive and less fanatical Turks managed to squeeze themselves in, and it was a miracle that we were not all suffocated. During the ceremony, the friends of the bride were showering sweet almonds and comfits over the crowd, and then the squeezing was terrific, as every one tried to pick up some of the bonbons. There was one fat old Frenchman, a leech merchant,

residing at Adana, who happened to be standing at the door of the church when the ceremony had concluded, and in the rush made to get out, he received such a violent and sudden push, that he went flying across the street, and was lost to us for an hour or more, having found it utterly impossible to extricate himself from a ditch into which he had fallen, and where he was firmly kept down by some Turkish boys who had rolled in upon him. The wedding festival was kept up for three days and nights, without intermission, and I never before was witness to such extensive gormandizing as I then beheld.

The population of Adana is estimated at about thirty-five thousand. With the exception of its being the seat of Government, or, more properly speaking, the residence of the Pasha of Adana, it is of no note, and is of little importance as a commercial town.

From Adana, I proceeded to the noted pass

of Kulek Bogas, which was strongly fortified during Ibrahim Pasha's residence in Syria. Five hours after leaving Adana, we arrived at a khan, situated in the very gorge of this mountain. The hour being late, Mr. C—— and myself resolved upon passing the night at the khan.

It was a wretched, deserted place, with no shutters to the windows, and only half a door, which we unhinged, and made use of, to lay under our mattresses, the place being very damp. With the exception of two or three Arnout soldiers, who, wrapped up in their shaggy cloaks, nodded over a fire, lit in the centre of the room, there was no one but ourselves to share this miserable shelter. Early next morning, we started again, and passed through the magnificent pass. For miles and miles, the road was not more than six feet wide. Beneath us lay a fearful chasm, many hundreds of feet deep; above, rose perpendicular rocks, many hundred feet high. In such a

place, it was no agreeable matter to meet, as we did, a caravan of loaded camels. We had the choice of being knocked over, and dashed to pieces, or being squeezed to death against the rocky walls; or we could turn back again, and go many miles before reaching a single inlet wherein to creep, whilst the camels passed. At length, Mr. C—— insisted on the camel-drivers making their camels lie down; and this being done, we walked between them and the rock, stretching over the cotton-bales, and forcing our horses to follow our example. At mid-day, we reached a village on the summit, and walking down, counted one hundred and twenty spiked cannons on the batteries.

From this lofty elevation on the Taurus, I could see the plains of Asia Minor as far as the eye could reach, in the direction of Konia.

There is a very picturesque little village, called Kulek, situated on that part of the Taurus which overlooks the entry into the pass of Kulek Bogas, on the Konia side. The houses

are built in imitation of Swiss cottages, with planks overlapping each other, instead of being roofed with tiles or thatch-work. This village was constructed by the command of Ibrahim Pasha, under the superintendence of an experienced European officer employed in the Egyptian army. It was intended to be occupied by peasants, who would cultivate the rich soil of the neighbourhood, so as to enable the fortified garrison to be wholly independent of any of the more distant towns for an annual supply of grain and provender. With very little exertion on the part of the labourer, this purpose would have been easily effected; for such was the fertility of the soil, that seeds falling, or thrown carelessly upon the ground, sprang up, and thrived without further care. The village is still kept up for agricultural purposes under the Turkish Government. It supplies Adana and Tarsous with the best grapes, melons, apricots, &c.; and its vegetables are unri-



valled in the Adana Pashalick, while the cattle and poultry fed up here, furnish the inhabitants of the neighbouring districts with very superior meat. Kulek enjoys an excellent climate, and sickness is rare in these lofty mountain ranges.

Mr. Clapperton and myself remained some days at this village, as the guests of Hassan Effendi, the Turkish Governor. During the day we rambled over the mountains in search of antiquities, and sometimes got a glimpse of a ruined castle, but nothing more. Returning towards evening, we found Hassan Effendi awaiting us to dine. Our toilet being arranged, the signal was given, and forthwith a circular little table, not more than a foot high, and with a great deal of carving and gilding about it, was placed in the centre, and immediately covered with a handsomely-embroidered Constantinople napkin. On this were placed wooden spoons, and drawing as near to it as

we possibly could, sitting cross-legged, the servant brought in the soup in one hand, and a long and elegantly-worked napkin in the other. The napkin he flung out, with amazing precision, in a circle, so that it fell upon the laps of the whole company, and served to protect our clothes during the repast.

At a Turkish dinner-party, unless you look very sharp, you are apt to come in for a meagre share of viands ; for the good things are no sooner served, than the servant almost immediately whips them off again, no culinary preparation, however excellent, being thought worthy of being partaken of, more than in two successive spoonfuls. Dish follows dish, and platter platter, in quick succession ; and the Turks, who do everything in a business manner, never think of talking when they are eating. In all, they appear to act up to that wholesome proverb which says, that there is a time for everything.

The greatest compliment you can pay your neighbour at dinner, is to tear some tit-bit off a fowl, or a leg of mutton, and put it into his plate. During dinner, water in a crystal cup was handed to such as asked for it; and as soon as dinner was over, every body rinsed his hands and mouth, when pipes were introduced. Now for the first time, Hassan Effendi would ask what sport we had had, which would lead to a little more conversation about English guns and powder. This would be followed by a cup of coffee, and then our host would retire for the night to a separate house, inhabited by his harem, and leave us masters of the place.

At length our agreeable visit was at end, and we took our departure. As we left the village behind, the lofty, snow-topped mountains, the extensive and endless forests of fir and mountain-ash, had a sublime appearance. In the serpentine path which leads towards Konia,

we observed a long caravan of camels, which, from our elevated position, had very much the appearance of a string of black ants carrying off grains for their winter provision.

I embarked at Mersine in a coasting-boat of the country, and in forty-eight hours was landed on the island of Cyprus.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Arrival at Cyprus—Larnaca—The climate and the people—A Cypriote Romance—Signor Balda Mattea—Story of a priest—Nicosia—Departure for England.

LARNACA, the principal sea-port of Cyprus, has an extremely pretty appearance from the sea. But the white ranges of houses built along the beach are principally shops and warehouses ; the residents live inland, about half a mile from the beach.

Mr. Niven Kerr, who was our Consul when

I visited Cyprus, was extremely hospitable and kind to me during my stay, though I lived with Mr. Cerrutti, the Sardinian Consul, than whom it would be difficult to meet a more excellent or better-informed man.

Larnaca is celebrated for its wines, the Camandaria, dry and sweet, and red wine. For my own part, I think all of them execrable. Here we were once again among carriages, which are hardly known in Syria or Palestine. Every respectable person in Larnaca has his phaeton or gig, though, to say the truth, they are, at best, most wretched turn-outs. The churches are permitted to have bells, a privilege unknown in other Turkish towns. From a tall spire of the Catholic church, which for security is built in the precincts of the Sardinian consulate, the bell every Sunday morning tolls the hour for public worship.

The people are exceedingly fond of gaiety, and I often had my night's rest interrupted by

fond youths serenading their mistresses. Balls and evening parties are of continual occurrence, and the Polka was introduced just previously to my arrival, by the officers of one of the Queen's ships.

The climate is anything but healthy; and Larnaca, like a great number of Eastern towns, is surrounded by marsh miasmas. The trade is inconsiderable. Plenty of vessels frequent the port, but they merely come for the purpose of buying provisions, which are both cheap and good. French and Italian vessels, which are homeward bound, lay in a stock of wine and biscuit here for the use of the crews, and the biscuits of Larnaca are, in my opinion, equal to those made in any part of Europe.

Every traveller who has ever visited Cyprus has heard of Signor Baldo Matteo, the Ebenezer Scrooge of the East. While I was at Larnaca, a sad adventure, furnishing ample materials for a melodrama, nearly terminated old Baldo's life,

and all his speculations. His only daughter, and heiress, lost her heart to a needy Austrian, who had come to Cyprus expressly to make his fortune by marriage. Hearing of the wealth of old Baldo, and of his daughter, he fixed upon him at once ; but Baldo was not to be easily caught, and totally repulsed every advance. The Austrian grew desperate, and, as a final resource, became fanatically religious, attending the Catholic chapel morning, noon, and night. Nothing could exceed his devotion to a certain old priest troubled with the cramp, on whose leg he sat, whenever it was attacked, till the pain passed off. When, after this, he whispered to him the sin that preyed most heavily upon his mind, which was a wish to possess riches, that he might bestow them on Mother Church, and hinted at a passion for Miss Baldo, he received immediate absolution, and was next day dining at old Baldo's table, in company with the Padre Presidenti, and seated next to the object in



whom all his hopes were concentrated. Miss B. was luckily placed on his right, and heard with unspeakable rapture all his protestations of love and devotion. Had she been on his left, these would all have been lost, as she had been perfectly deaf on that side from her birth.

To be brief, the Austrian proposed, and was accepted, and all that he had now to obtain was old Baldo's consent. Baldo, however, as a man of the world, saw clearly through his designs, and knew him to be a knave, though he had too much reverence for the priestly clique, who had introduced the Austrian, to give a decided negative. All he asked was time—a year—to consider so important a measure. This was accorded, and Baldo devoutly prayed that the true character of his daughter's suitor might before that time be unmasked. His prayer was granted, but in a way the least expected, and certainly the least agreeable to himself.

The lover of the Signorina Baldo, finding his

exchequer rather low, and being sorrowfully conscious of his inability to increase his wealth, so as to enable him to keep up necessary appearances, came to the desperate resolution of grasping, without further delay, his intended wife's fortune, by sending poor old Baldo out of the world. Accordingly, armed with a loaded double-barrelled pistol, which he concealed about his person, he proceeded to Matteo's house at an hour when he knew he would find him alone, the daughter and servants being in the habit of attending high mass on Sunday mornings ; and he knocked at the door, which, after a little hesitation, was opened to him. Old Baldo, though believed to be an honourable man, and fair and just in his transactions with others, was a confirmed miser. He had accumulated great sums in hard cash, which, unseen by human eye, he had buried in his garden, and hidden in various parts of his house. The house was going to ruin, and

wanted whitewashing and repairing in many parts. The garden was a perfect wilderness of weeds and thistles ; but these he set fire to regularly once a year, and by this means, to a certain extent, kept them under. As for gardeners armed with a spade, which might dig up and bring to light all kinds of secret hoards, if there was one trade Baldo detested, it was this. He kept the key of his walled-in garden, and on Sundays, when all his family were absent, he strolled about in it till their return.

He was thus occupied when he admitted his would-be son-in-law ; and the first thing this promising youth did, was to draw forth his pistol and take deliberate aim, discharging it at the breast of the feeble old man, who, tottering backwards a few paces, fell to the earth apparently a corpse. For such the murderer took him ; and depositing the pistol close by his side, to make it appear he had died by his own

hand, he rushed into the street, closing the door after him.

Running with the haste of a man charged with some important news, he came suddenly on a gentleman attached to the Austrian Consulate, whom he breathlessly informed that passing near Baldo's house, he had heard the report of a pistol, followed by a sound like that of some heavy body falling to the earth, that he had in vain knocked at the door for admission, and that he had no doubt in his own mind that some sad catastrophe had occurred.

In a few seconds a perfect mob was collected at Baldo's door, which they broke open; and rushing in, beheld old Baldo stretched upon the ground, his clothes literally saturated with blood, and a pistol lying close by his side. The assassin, who never dreamt that the old man was still alive, witnessed this spectacle with fiendish triumph, though loudly lamenting the

loss of him, whom he called his best friend on earth. But it happened that the ball, though it struck against a part where a wound would have been mortal, had come in contact with the sharp edge of a bone, which turned it in another direction, and it was now safely lodged between the skin and the spine. Baldo, who had fainted from fright and loss of blood, now, to the amazement of all, recovered his senses, and hearing the voice of his late assailant, slowly raised himself up, and denounced him on the spot. Having done this, he fell back, and again became unconscious. The wretch was immediately seized and handcuffed, and safely borne away to the Austrian Consulate, where he was placed in confinement.

Doctors were now assembled from all parts of Cyprus, and all examined the wound, and declared it fatal, expressing the greatest surprise that the patient should have lingered so long. The blood being staunched, and Baldo suffering

from no real injury, but labouring under a sense of approaching dissolution, begged that a confessor might be sent for. To this confessor, he acknowledged, amongst other offences, the commission of one sin which weighed heavier than all the rest upon his guilty conscience. It appeared that his niece, who was then married to a French merchant at Larnaca, had been left at a very early age an orphan, and had become his ward. She had, however, been well provided for by her parents, and a large sum of money had been deposited in his hands, which, after covering the expenses of her education and board, &c., would still leave a considerable surplus as a marriage portion. Now old Baldo, never forgetting his thrift, had more than twice turned this capital over before the date of the niece's marriage, but he had retained the proceeds as his own, handing over the principal to the bridegroom on the nuptial day. But on the approach of death, as it

seemed, he felt considerable qualms of conscience, and confessed his unworthy stewardship, and indicated the spots where these savings were concealed. The husband of the niece quickly dug them up, and came into possession. Scarcely was this done, when Baldo recovered, and would almost have forgiven the attempt upon his life, had it not involved such serious results.

The Austrian was by the Turkish authorities handed over to his own Consulate, and was eventually removed to Trieste, but I believe, for lack of sufficient testimony, escaped punishment. This affair, as it may be imagined, created a great sensation in Cyprus, which was once the scene of the memorable tragedy which terminated the life of Desdemona.

From Larnaca I proceeded to Nicosia, the capital of all Cyprus. It is a fine healthy town, approached through a subterranean gate. The fortress is still in excellent condition, and

is always well garrisoned. The houses are the handsomest I have ever seen in the East, and are all detached, each house having a fine garden round it.

At the house of Signor Chelibi Yanko, the principal Greek in the Island of Cyprus, I have tasted some Camandaria that had been forty-five years in barrel. This was something like wine; a fine oily old wine, unequalled in flavour by any I have tasted in the East.

It was in Nicosia, about the year 1840, that Dame Fortune once more played off one of her eccentric frolics on the person of a poor Greek priest, who had little to depend upon in this world, save such meagre offerings as the more charitable of his parishioners bestowed upon him. As the story goes, he was a devout and holy man, but beyond being able to go through the regular routine of his priestly office, possessed but scant learning, and was equally ignorant of the world's ways and manners. At the



commencement of a fast, fearing he should, from his defective memory, forget its exact duration, he carefully filled his pockets with so many dried peas as there were fast days, and each day extracting one from his pockets, as the peas diminished, he was warned of the proximity of a feast, and prepared accordingly. On one occasion, his wife happening to find a few peas in her husband's pockets, and imagining the devout man was fond of this Eastern luxury, very affectionately replenished his pockets from her own store of cadamies, or roasted peas. Great was the consternation of his congregation, when on the eve of the feast day, instead of proclaiming its advent from the pulpit, as is usual, he informed them that eight or ten days yet remained for the approaching festival. A discussion on this point immediately ensued, when the priest, in confirmation of what he asserted, produced from his pocket the remaining peas, making known at the same time his

method of calculating. Upon this, his wife stepped forward, and acknowledged what she had done, and great merriment ensued, in which the priest joined.

To this poor man, fortune now brought one of those rare windfalls which are more frequently heard of than experienced. One summer's evening he was seated in the court-yard of his humble house, watching with satisfaction and delight the gambols of his little children, who were amusing themselves with throwing stones at a hole in the wall. At length he remarked, that whenever a stone chanced to go near the crevice, he heard a ringing sound, and to convince himself that he was not deceived, he stepped nearer, and hit it repeatedly with a stone, each time hearing the sound distinctly. It now occurred to him that there was some concealed treasure within, and the thought made him tremble with expectation. He went to bed early, but not to sleep, having formed the determination that he would

that night make a rigorous search. When all was still, he rose from his sleepless couch, and going out stealthily and noiselessly, commenced, by aid of a small pickaxe, breaking into the wall, removing stone by stone. He had hardly worked an hour, when out fell a bag of doubloons, followed by a second and a third. This was indeed a treasure, sufficient to satisfy a more covetous man ; but he felt there would be no safety with it in Cyprus. That very night, he carefully stowed his riches in two saddle-bags, and before daybreak, awoke his wife and acquainted her with their good fortune, when horses were hired at a neighbouring khan, and priest, wife, and children turned their backs upon Nicosia, and arriving early at Larnaca, embarked that very day on board a vessel sailing for Italy. The priest became the head of one of the wealthiest mercantile firms now established at Leghorn, and is, I believe, still living.

The population of Nicosia is computed at

nine thousand souls, *i. e.* seven thousand Greeks, and two thousand Turks. In Cyprus there are three times as many Greeks as Turks, and taking one with another, they are about the greatest set of scamps that were ever accumulated in one country.

I left Nicosia, and returned to Larnaca, and from Larnaca sailed in a British schooner for England.

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## **ITINERARY.**



## ITINERARY.

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THE best method of travelling through Syria and Palestine, and making the tour of Turkey, is by commencing at Gazà, which point can be reached from Cairo by land, and from Alexandria by sea, either in the steamer which touches at Jaffa, or by native vessels plying direct to Gaza.

From Gaza the tour of the holy villages can be easily made, going first to Hebron and the



Jordan, and in returning, to Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

I have made a kind of itinerary, which I now introduce as a guide to travellers going over to Syria.

Nearly all travellers leave the East without visiting the most interesting part of Syria—Antioch and the Aleppo Pashalick. This arises from their being quite worn out by the time they reach Beyrout, and from a supposition that all Oriental towns are alike, and that having seen one, they have seen the whole. But this is a very erroneous notion, for no two Pashalicks resemble each other, and much less as far as refers to the various features of the country. The finest gardens in the world, the most romantic and picturesque scenery, and the healthiest climate, are all met with after passing Beyrout, and continuing north-

ward; yet seldom or ever does the traveller visit the banks of the Orontes, and the beautiful gardens of Daphne.

After visiting Jaffa and Nazareth, on the return from Jerusalem, the best method is to sail along the sea coast in an Arab felucca to Caipha. Horses can be easily sent round by land, and the traveller by this means is saved a fatiguing and uninteresting ride through a barren country, or along a scorching beach. From Caipha he visits Carmel, and from Carmel proceeds by land to St. Jean d'Acre.

Travellers who have their own horses with them, should keep a sharp eye on their Arab grooms, and, if possible, manage to overlook the feeding and cleaning of their horses. These grooms are both lazy and knavish.

In my opinion, an interpreter is quite a supernumerary in a traveller's suite; and beyond

doubt, the general run of them are the greatest rogues in the world. I never knew an instance where their services were needed ; for in every town, cicerones are to be picked up, and if the choice be given to permanent interpreters, the traveller should wait till arriving at Beyrout, where Arab boys, who have a thorough knowledge of English, are plentiful, and far more to be trusted than those demi-Europeans, who are to be found thronging about hotels and coffee-shops in Smyrna and Alexandria.

From Acre to Sour, and Sidon, is a pleasant trip either by land or sea. Sidon well merits a few days spent in strolling about its beautiful environs. Beyrout has also a great many attractions, and a visit to Balbec and Damascus would well repay the trouble. Thence, passing Tripoli and Latachia, you diverge from the sea-side, and strike over the mountains towards

Aleppo. Here sportsmen will find plenty of excellent game. Deer, gazelles, and hares abound; and the banks of the river at Gessir il Shoor are thickly wooded, and abound with frankolins and water-fowl.

No one should dream of leaving Aleppo in less than ten days; and at the expiration of that period, I strongly advise a visit to Kilis, and Antab, and Homs, and Hamar. They are all fine towns, and the country about them is richly cultivated, and redolent with orange-flower and citron-blossoms.

Returning hence, the traveller can come by a road that brings him direct to Antioch, without again passing through Aleppo; and keeping at Antioch as a central starting point, he visits successively Suedia, Bitias, Daphne, &c. This pleasant tour accomplished, he turns his horse's head towards Alexandretta, making his first

halting-place Beilan, and thence by an easy two hours' ride, arriving at Alexandretta. Byass terminates his travels in Syria, and he enters upon a new field in Asia Minor. Adana, Kuluk, Bogas, Tarsous, and Mersine, as also Konia, and the Greek village of Scylla or Cela, are all equally attractive; but should he be desirous of visiting Cyprus, I recommend his taking boat from Byass to Larnaca, and sending his horses round by land to Tarsous, there to await his arrival. After finishing the tour of Cyprus, he proceeds through all the aforementioned towns, and passing through Asia Minor, arrives at Smyrna and Constantinople.

Were this track followed and passed leisurely through, the traveller would very much enjoy his jaunt, and perhaps return to England only to lament ever having left those fair shores,

where the sun is scarcely ever obscured by a cloud.

And now I have brought my grateful task to a close, and earnestly hope my efforts may be rewarded by imparting some small amusement, or instruction, to such of the public as may look for it in this book.

THE END.

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